

# THE FORUM

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## Bofors : Evading the Truth

H.G. Deshpande

coincidence in particular however needs to be recalled. On the day the almost 400 page report was presented in a draft from to the Committee for approval, the Hindu of Madras published some further damaging evidence. It showed that a group of Indians who had wideranging business connections all over the world had something to do with it. This refers to the Hindujas, a family said to be worth 11 billion. Whether this estimate is correct or not, it is the kind of business house which could play a part in a drama like the one that the country has been passing through.

No authorised representative of the Swedish or Indian Government or of Bofors or of the Swedish banks concerned, has come forward to challenge the authenticity of the five documents published, including the tell tale bank documents, by the Hindu.

It is now clear that right from the start of its existence, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the

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ernment of any suspicion in the matter. The committee cannot sustain one of its principal findings in terms of its own report. For while it has, on the one hand, said that Bofors had refused to disclose the identities of the owners of the three front companies which had received payments from it in connection with the Indian deal on the plea of business confidentiality, the committee has, on the other, held that "there is no evidence to show that any part of the winding up costs was paid to any Indian either resident in India or abroad." The contradiction between the statement of the fact that Bofors had refused to provide the details and the inference that no Indian had been recipient of the "winding up costs" is obvious. Of course, no one gave the committee evidence implicating an Indian, resident in India or abroad, in the payoffs. But also no one gave it details about the three companies which alone could have enabled it to determine whether or not any Indian had in fact received some payments from Bofors.

The JPC report would have had some credibility if it had confessed its inability to get at the real truth. But it went on to give the government a clean certificate. Now the fact that bribes (or commissions as they are sometimes called) were given has been stated by no less a body than the Swedish National Audit Bureau. And that the public prosecutor of Sweden has said is that no spe-

cific Swedish laws might have been violated. But this does not mean that the "commissions" might not have found their way into other pockets as bribes.

### The Connections

To go into details of what the report says and what has been included and what has been excluded is not called for. Newspapers are full of it. One

Corruption without question is a danger to democracy. In particular, if corruption goes unpunished. The Bofors inquiry proves it clearly and so does another inquiry relating to the purchase of submarines from Germany. In both cases data, both known and unknown, is with the government. A crime can be provided only if that data is presented to indict those who wield the levers of powers. But if there is no intention to penalise anyone, the most obvious course to adopt is not to produce the evidence. In consequence no one will be held guilty and, furthermore, there will be no occasion to punish.

## Sikh Meet Denounces Terror Tactics

(From our Correspondent)

**KARNAL:** A convention of the Sikhs of Haryana at the Panchayat Bhawan Karnal took stock of the prevailing circumstances in Punjab and other parts of India and urged the Union government to take speedy steps to resolve the issues thrown up by the prolonged agitation in Punjab.

The speakers emphasised the fact that to all impartial observers it is becoming clear that the Union government has developed a kind of vested interest in the continuation of Punjab problem. It is evident that the ruling party at the Centre is out to muster the votes from the rest of India at the cost of Punjab and the Sikhs as a people. These vested interests inspire the spokesmen of the Union government to present each and every demand of a democratic agitation as a step towards Khalistan behind the screen of redressal of grievances.

The speakers made it repeatedly clear that the Sikhs are not agitating for Khalistan or secession from the Union of India. Khalistan has not been demanded by

any representative or responsible Sikh organization. It is a calculated design of the ruling party to present some Sikh formations on the fringe of the community asking for secession to be the spokesmen of the entire community.

This opportunistic communalisation of all non-communal issues like river waters and territory will eventually bring disaster to all of us—Sikhs, Hindus and others. The meeting made it a point to expose these diabolical designs of the power-politicians.

### Populist Gains

S.H.S. Nalwa outstanding advocate of Karnal set the tone in his opening remarks. Sardar Nalwa pointed out that the government of India has made it a cardinal point of its policy to prolong the Punjab problem for electoral and populist gains. By this policy the ruling

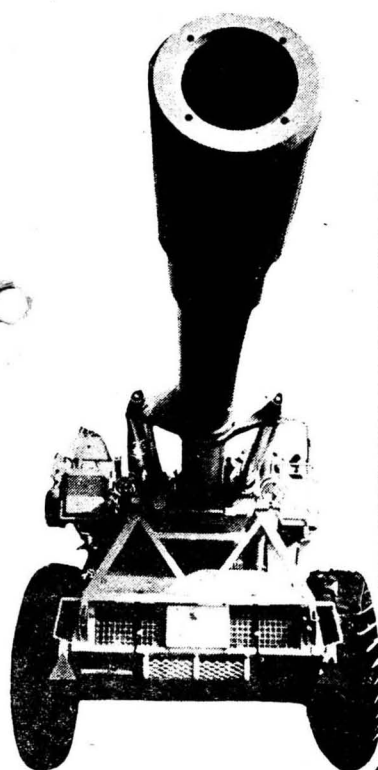
party is trying to gain legitimacy in the rest of the country at the cost of Punjab. This policy widens the divide between Punjab and rest of the country and is the worst attack on the unity and integrity of the country by which the ruling group

swears. The pity is that they only make a Mantra out of it. In practice they are destroying it themselves by communalising politics and non-communal issues like Chandigarh. Sardar Nalwa told the

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Advocate Nalwa of the Haryana Sikh Forum a midst Hissar residents



When the Joint Parliamentary Committee was set up to investigate the kickbacks and other details of the Bofors case, it was clear to most people that it was an attempt to buy time and evade the truth. That is precisely what has happened.

Clearly the Joint Parliamentary Committee has not settled the controversy regarding the alleged payoffs in the Bofors gun deal to the satisfaction of the general public, not to speak of the government's critics. Indeed, even those, who do not subscribe to the charge that it has done a white-wash job, would find it difficult to say that it has not been a bit too enthusiastic in clearing the gov-

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## Cartoons of the Fortnight

Sunday



## Sound and Fury

If the state government (of West Bengal) was so serious about keeping us in West Bengal then they should have offered us *rosogollas* and not bullets and lathis.

- Subash Ghisingh, GNLF president

I am not Congressman you know. I don't believe in double-talk.

- Joyti Basu, West Bengal chief minister

We are grateful to him (Rajiv Gandhi) for giving us so much attention. That is why I say, I am not an Opposition chief minister. Neither am I a Congressman.

- Laldenga, Mizoram chief minister

To win elections, the Prime Minister may engage in any adventure or mis-adventure.

- Atal Behari Vajpayee, BJP leader

Pakistan has virtually attacked India by supplying sophisticated arms and ammunition to Punjab terrorists.

- Jathedar Rachpal Singh, president of the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh group)

I fail to understand why so much importance should be given to Maneka Ganhid's role during the Emergency. She was just the wife of Sanjay Gandhi...

- Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party president

Doordarshan is quite like a government which collects taxes...What is important for a newspaper need not necessarily be important for us as well.

- Bhaskar Ghosh, director general of Doordarshan

If Amitabh does not contest, then I am not available...The challenge is at that level.

- V.P. Singh in the Times of India

This man (V.P. Singh) achieved great heights only because of the Congress Party...And look what he has done. He has stabbed us all in the back.

- Bir Bahadur Singh in The Statesman

The people of Assam have been cheated in the name of organised movements and today they should think seriously before joining any movement.

- Rajiv Gandhi at the Congress (I) workers convention in Guwahati, quoted in The Statesman

For five years the Janta Party was solid and it was a pleasure to head it...The charm has been completely destroyed.

- Ramakrishna Hegde quoted in the Telegraph

Let Rajiv Gandhi just boldly walk into the Golden Temple and say 'Let's call it quits. We're sorry for what happened, you're one of us'...But I don't think he has the courage.

- Khushwant Singh quoted in the Indian Post

I will be equally happy if the prime minister posted me as a security guard outside his residence. I am at Rajiv Gandhi's disposal.

- Priyaranjan Das Munshi, Union minister of state for commerce, in The Illustrated Weekly of India

It is national unity and humanism that can best and most fully, energise our people. Come what may, we are one-as we have been for thousands of years.

- Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice-President of India

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## NEWSHOUND

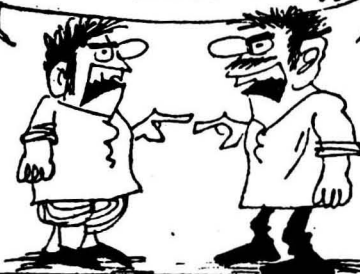
YOU THINK THESE LARGE RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS MEAN MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO GOD?



I GUESS SO...

## By Rap

YA! OUR GOD CAN ORGANISE A BIGGER RALLY THAN YOUR GOD!!





- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality for Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

# Pakistan Connection

K.S. Khosla

## Two Years Later

With this issue, the Forum Gazette completes the first two years of its career. These have been years of struggle, poverty of resources, divided councils and inability to make an impact beyond a point. The only marvel here is that we have managed to survive.

It is certainly such a marvel that one may claim more than mere satisfaction over it. Starting and running a journal require several things. While ideology would be too strong a word to use something close to it has to be there. In our case we worked out five guidelines for ourselves. Each one of them seeks to project an important aspect of our social and national life. It should not be particularly necessary to dilate upon each one of them and explain their significance. Over the two years that we have been in existence, readers have seen for themselves how faithfully we have gone about implementing them.

The country is gripped by a social and economic crisis. At least three of our guidelines (civil liberties, democratic rights and protection of minorities) cover a large sector of the crisis through which the polity is passing. It is not an accident that in the early 70's the slogan was 'Garibi Hatao' and in the 80's it became 'Unity and Integrity' of the country. This shows the through path that the country was travelled during less than two decades.

Unable to remove poverty, it was thought expedient to shift the focus to an emotive issue like the unity and integrity of the country. Neither the first slogan nor the second one were meant seriously, both were meant to hoodwink the common man. How the common man has been deceived into believing there is another issue. While the issue of removing poverty was important no doubt, something believed to be more urgent projected and it is important to understand why the earlier issues of removing poverty were quietly relegated into the background and currently we are asked to worry about the unity and integrity of the country. The political story of the last two decades is contained in one may so in the manner in which these two slogans were coined and, no less important, these are being projected day after day with some success initial no doubt but with less and less willingness to truth those who may be described as political manipulators.

Now a new slogan 'Bekari Hatao' is being projected. To what extent it will be accepted or people will be taken in by it remains to be seen. The thinking behind it however is transparent. To put it no more crudely, it is an attempt to befuddle people. If one slogan does not work, why not try another and yet another.

The second slogan succeeded because it was possible to create a state of anxiety in the minds of the people. In the case of the third slogan, it is difficult to see how it can be given a practical shape. What people demand is real, concrete action and that is not likely to be forthcoming in the near future. Even if the eight plan is formulated in such a way that new jobs are proposed to be created in large numbers, it will be several years before the impact is felt. Meanwhile there would be a vacuum and how to fill in that vacuum is the problem confronting the ruling party.

It is in this context that one has to understand the situation in Punjab and Darjeeling, the 59th Amendment, the alleged complicity of Pakistan and the rest. One issue which has been kept in reserve is the Ramjanam Bhoomi and Babri masjid tangle. It can be any time and considerable mileage can be got out of it. Only it is not one of those issues where once the fuse gets lighted, the flames can be controlled as convenient. If the polity catches fire, it is any body's guess how it would work out. In plain words, it is easy to light the fire but it is difficult to control it.

One does not know therefore what the future of the country is going to be. Meanwhile the relevance of the three guidelines referred to above is unmistakably clear. The health of the polity is determined by the extent to which the minorities are treated fairly and protectively. If these two things do not happen, democratic rights as well as civil liberties are in danger. More and more people are beginning to see the relationship between what happens to the minorities and what happens to the polity. If a democratic polity is to be sustained, the protection of the minorities is imperative. If the minorities are well looked after and the polity is democratic in outlook and functioning civil liberties are ensured; otherwise these also get undermined.

Equality for women is a pre-condition for any kind of development. Development is inconceivable without women playing the role that they are capable of. Over the centuries, they have been oppressed and exploited. The situation is changing somewhat but ever so slowly. One need not take too dismal a view of what is happening. At the same time one cannot take an optimistic view either. It is one slow grind and one has to keep on grinding, consistently and systematically. The recent incident of Sati in Rajasthan shocked everyone. Clearly the ground reality is ugly and painful and very different from what is happening in towns and cities. Even there, the number of dowry deaths has increased. Maybe it has not increased and the phenomenon has become only near noticeable. Whatever it be, the fact remains that this is a crucial sector

A press party taken on a two-day tour of Khemkaran and Ajnala sectors of the border in Amritsar district recently has come back convinced that the border with Pakistan cannot be sealed. The Indo-Pak border is too long, too vast and too varied to make sealing possible and effective. The cost of logistics and manpower is forbidding. There is the hilly terrain in Jammu and Kashmir and a desert in Rajasthan. Even the 533-km border in Punjab, though in flat land, has a riverine section of about 282 kms. Then there are small islands within the Sutlej and Ravi rivers which go on changing their course.

Under the circumstances, it is only possible to check the flow of arms and men into India or the crossing over of Indians from this side into Pakistan. And this is exactly what the Border Security Force is presently engaged in doing in view of the increased and tangible help by Pakistan to smugglers and extremists to sneak into India. The BSF outposts have observed that for the last two months no ordinary smugglers with 12 bore guns are

coming. They have better sophisticated weapons and "now they want to fight and push their way through." The BSF officials believe that Pakistani authorities are helping the infiltrators. The intruders are brought to the Pakistan outposts, and conducted right up to the border, and sometimes given firing cover to smuggle in arms and narcotics. There have been six major encounters with intruders during the last two months in which seven infiltrators were killed. The intruders now put up stiff resistance. Though in most of the cases the intruders have managed to flee back to Pakistan, they have left behind a large number of sophisticated weapons and ammunition.

### Fencing

Contrary to the electronic media's reports that fencing of Punjab border has begun, there was no evidence of it, though the Central Public Works Department has started surveying the areas prone to infiltration. First of all, the entire Punjab border is not going to be fenced. Only about the most

porous section of 100 kms will be fenced. Such fencing is normally about ten high and about 15 feet in width and has to be 150 yards away from the border. The work of regular fencing will begin in about two to three weeks time. The officials see no hurdle in the way of acquiring land for fencing as the villagers are very cooperative and have agreed to have compensation later.

Meanwhile, BSF has started putting up low wire obstacles of various kinds to create hurdles in the way of infiltrators. This work will be completed in about two weeks time. The idea is that even if some infiltrators are able to sneak in, they will not find it easy to run back to Pakistan. Apart from these the BSF is using booby traps, flares to illuminate dark nights, better weapons and night vision binoculars.

Given all these measures to plug the porous areas, the BSF officials frankly admit that it will not be possible to check infiltration altogether, but they can certainly put obstructions in the way and if the terrorists come in, they will find it difficult to go back. This is the experience the world over. Even the U.S., which has much better weapons and intelligence network, has not been able to stop infiltration through its Mexican border.

### Active Help

Though the BSF officials do not say so openly, they are aware of the active help being given to terrorists to fan the secessionist movement in Punjab and create an insurgency like situation. The daily count of killings is 10 to 15 and the terrorists have been able to terrorise the people living in the border villages of Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. Reports are that the terrorists have not started using horses for their nocturnal raids. Normally these horses are stolen from the rich farmers and returned to the stables in the morning. To meet this new challenge, the BSF has started patrolling on horses in some areas. Smuggling of men and weapons into India has been going on for years but of late, according to Mr. Parkash Singh, Inspector General of Police, BSF, it has become "more blatant and conspicuous." He identified eight training camps in Pakistan including those at Narowal, Kasur, Abbotabad, Lahore, Changa-Monga, Multan and other places. He could not give the exact number of terrorists receiving training at these camps but the number was sizable. Interrogation of captured terrorists indicate that Pakistan was gifting sophisticated weapons to them.

The border in Amritsar district is 211 kms long, part of which is riverine. The strength of BSF has been increased substan-

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## MATRIMONIALS

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# Bofors Truth

Continued from page 1

Bofors howitzer deal, especially its Chairman, Mr. B. Shankaranand, had ruled out information and revelations relating to the Bofors deal in press reports as a basis for further investigation.

The minutes of the JPC's deliberations reveal several instances where the Committee which had admitted to an "onerous responsibility" to "ascertain the true facts" deliberately decided to ignore the results of the independent investigations into the Bofors pay-offs that were steadily turning up much more promising leads to the identities of the recipients and chose instead to insist that these could not form the basis of its investigations.

The discernible shades of hostility in the JPC's and its Chairman's attitude to the media revelations reinforced the sense of unease among some of its members that far from being anxious to unravel the sordid sequence of events, which would mean grasping at any possible leads and checking out all the available evidence, the Committee was embarked on a massive cover-up operation.

What is important to note is that the manner in which the

Inquiry has been conducted makes it clear that there was no intention to identify those who had received the kickbacks. The formal position is that if they get identified, they have to be punished. Does it not make good sense therefore that they are not identified and the situation remains murky and confused?

Even though the press has played an extraordinary role in unearthing more and evidence, some of it is highly incriminating, surely the press endeavours cannot go beyond a point. There are all kinds of missing links. It is possible to make the necessary connections provided the government is determined to do so. It is the government alone which has the necessary resources to be able to discover the missing links. Private individuals, however enterprising and resourceful, cannot do it. And this is where the catch lies.

## Catching the Guilty

The government makes a pretence of catching the guilty but then would not take those indispensable steps which would make it possible to

catch them. This is an old technique. It was practised during the Emergency also as the proceedings of Shah Commission made amply clear. The proceedings might have suffered from various infirmities but the overwhelming impression that they produced was that state powers had been used in the interest of certain private ends. As someone described it, what we witnessed was the use of the state as private property.

It appears that the process is still at work. If anything it has got more refined and sophisticated. It is not possible to admit guilt in so many words for, in the eyes of law, everyone is equal. Even if a minister is caught violating the law he is as answerable as the meanest of citizens. But there has been hardly a single case during the last four decades when anyone who had access to political power, and the ministers belong to this category, has ever been convicted. Even in a few instances when there was a fool-proof cases, nothing came out of it. This is in total contrast to the practice in other countries which too claim to be democratic: Malaysia, for instance.

Unpunished crime is the biggest incitement to further crime. As a 19th century British thinker, Jeremy Bentham, once put it, "What is important is not the quantum but the certainty of punishment". This is what is missing from our situation. And this is precisely what represents the biggest danger to our young and uncertain democracy.

## Dissenting Note

Aladi Aruna has pointed out in his dissenting note, the Swedish Audit Bureau has confirmed that "considerable amounts were paid to Bofors' previous agent in India." The Swedish public prosecutor has also stated that "there is reason to believe that a crime of bribery has been committed."

As Aruna points out there is therefore no doubt about the payment of huge amounts amounting to Rs.64 crore as "commission." Are the reasons given out by Bofors acceptable? Who were the recipients? What services did they render? No answers have been forthcoming. The failure to find answers to these relevant questions has cast grave aspersions not only on Bofors but on those at the Delhi end who took part in the negotiations leading to the finalisation of the guns contract.

Of course, Aladi Aruna would not have appended his disturbing and revealing note of dissent if the AIADMK had not split or if the ministry headed by its Janaki faction had not been dismissed by the Central government. In a way, Aruna's onslaught on the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee is Janaki's revenge against the Centre for sacking her at the last moment after promising its full support.

But this does not in any way minimise the significance of Aruna's disclosures. He has described in great detail the casual manner in which the JPC went about its task. He has alleged that the committee's members were treated like school children.

What those who perpetrate the crimes and get away with it count upon is the fact that the common people are illiterate. Consequently they are unable to follow those crucial details which show that scumming underhand has been

going on. Most often, it is reading between the lines which enables most people to form their own judgement. Being illiterate this is precisely what they cannot and that is how things have gone on year after year and decade after decade.

Corruption without question is a danger to democracy. In particular, if corruption goes unpunished. The Bofors inquiry proves it clearly and so does another inquiry relating to the purchase of submarines from Germany. In both cases data, both known and unknown, is with the government. A crime can be provided only if that data is presented to indict those who wield the levers of powers. But if there is no intention to penalise anyone, the most obvious course to adopt is not to produce the evidence. In consequence no one will be held guilty and, furthermore, there will be no occasion to punish.

This is the vicious circle in which the country is caught. It is not going to be easy to get out of it more so when another equally lethal political weapon can also be used in conjunction with corruption. That is communalism. Corruption and communalism, and it is difficult to say in which order they should be mentioned all the twin dangers to our nascent democracy. How effectively we can fight will determine our future and our fate.

# Terrorism Denounced

Continued from page 1

convention that the best defence of the country's unity and integrity is the unity of its people. This unity is reinforced by a feeling of justice and amity amongst the people.

At the present juncture the worst attack on this unity comes from Congi machination to divide and rule the people of India. He said it is time to call this bluff out and finish it. He expected the Lok Dal government of Haryana to set new standards in maintaining communal harmony and fair government in the state of Haryana.

## Sane People

S. Sardul Singh MLA (Safidon) in his speech covered another stretch of fresh ground. He asked the communalists to cease their fire and let the people live in dignity and peace. He affirmed that he is a devout and devoted Sikh yet elected to the Assembly by a Hindu electorate. He said that other friends like Sardar Chatha, Dr Harnam Singh, S.Harpal Singh confirm the fact that the voters in Haryana could not be communalised in spite of the efforts of the Congi to that effect. He congratulated the people of Haryana for this sanity. S.Sardul Singh said the new government of Haryana has brought a new gift to the Sikh population of the state: under the new Lok Dal government the Sikh people have been assured of dignified life as Haryana's own people and not mere migrants from

Punjab. He urged upon his compatriots to own their state and espouse its interests without any hesitation.

Swamy Agnivesh the national crusader for the bonded labourers in India spoke toichngly of the love and affection which he received from the peasantry--Sikh and Hindu during an agitation for remunerative prices to the farmers in the early sixties. He recounted how he liked to be in jail with his Sikh and Hindu farmer friends.

On issues pertaining to terror the convention categorically took the stand that terror begins where politics terminates. They cannot be mixed up.

Whatever the grievances of the concerned people may be terror is no way to redress them. In a democracy the grievances are to be redressed democratically. The task in Punjab is to put democracy on the rails. The union government must contribute its part by strengthening this effort towards the restoration of democracy in Punjab.

Lt. Gen. (Retd) Jagjit Singh Aurora summed up the consensus at the convention and urged the Union government to speed up a democratic resolution of the Punjab problem.

Principal Uppal of Khalsa College Karnal conducted the affairs of the convention with ability and success.

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# A Citizen calls on the President

by Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

**KHALISTAN is not only against the interests of the country but also against the interests of Sikhs as a community. Indeed only a lunatic fringe projects it and the idea has no support. And yet the uncivilised Government handling of disgruntled youth and its loss of credibility among the Sikh masses allows the publicity to the extremists. No civilised Government would allow the cover-up of the guilt of anti-Sikh carnage criminals of Nov. 1984 and no Parliament in the world expecting to be considered a civilised entity would sleep over such horrendous events so as not to consider it necessary even to express anguish and bewilderment at such a massacre. This sense of hurt along with continued incarceration of a large number of Sikhs without trial fuels extremism and creates hidden support for extremists.**

It was my privilege to be given time to meet the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 12th April 1988 and explain to him the anguish of an ordinary citizen concerning the situation in the Punjab. Both as a Sikh and as an Indian I conveyed my misgivings about the bunglings in the Punjab and what hurt me more was the systematic elimination of moderates when they could deliver the goods. As I had been to the Punjab with Baba Amte eight times in 1986 and 1987 and had studied the situation in depth, I ventured to make some suggestions in the note below delivered personally. The President, while listening to them, agreed that

- Punjab was not a Hindu-Sikh problem;
- Sikhs had always been in the forefront in every field and he remembered that people coming from Madras to Delhi felt safer in taxis of Sikhs in Delhi;
- "Khalistan" had no support among the Sikhs; and
- Immediate national solution was called for.

He specifically asked why Barnala was not accepted by the Sikhs and I clarified that he too lost ground, like Longowal compared to Bhindranwale before Bluestar, because he was not given political support in the form of removal of irritants like Jodhpur incarcerations or punishment of Nov. 84 criminals.

After personally explaining the situation, I gave the written note to the President who went through it patiently, while I swallowed the tea offered at the meeting. I submitted that as the President of all of us, he should envisage what he could do to help end the crisis even by his good offices and healthy influence. I ventured to ask what could be done to have the problem resolved. He referred to the new initiatives in connection with the release of Akal Takht chief and some Jodhpur detainees.

The President sympathetically reacted to my submissions and, while saying goodbye, remarked he would see what he could do.

I was in Delhi in connection with the Annual General Meeting of the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 28th March, 1988, when I sought time to meet the President. I also discussed the future plans of the HKNS about leprosy work and gave the details of the work done at Tapovan, Amravati where I am stationed in the service of leprosy patients.

Contrary to the present aberrations, KHALSA stands for service to humanity and I happen too be the lone Sikh at the feet of 1500 leprosy patients in Tapovan, none of whom is from Punjab. As a result of the present strife in Punjab, I have been accompanying Baba Amte on his tours on Punjab and am keenly interested that there should be end of present violence and national unity ensured. May I submit that.

1. It is our distinct impression that there is no Hindu-Sikh conflict in Punjab and it is only the Akali bungling and the Central Government's partisan adhocism that is responsible for the present turmoil.

2. KHALISTAN is not only against the interests of the country but also against the interests of Sikhs as a community. Indeed only a lunatic fringe projects it and the idea has no support. And yet the uncivilised Government handling of disgruntled youth and its loss of credibility among the Sikh masses allows the publicity to the extremists. No civilised Government would allow the cover-up of the guilt of anti-Sikh carnage criminals of Nov. 1984 and no Parliament in the world expecting to be considered a civilised entity would sleep over such horrendous events so as not to consider it

necessary even to express anguish and bewilderment at such a massacre. This sense of hurt along with continued incarceration of a large number of Sikhs without trial fuels extremism and creates hidden support for extremists.

3. The barbarous killing of innocent people by anyone who calls himself a Sikh is not only reprehensible but against the tenets of Sikhism. By all means, all efforts should be made to confront them but, unfortunately, the draconian laws and absence of civil liberties has given a free hand to the police and security forces to harass, detail and kill innocents among the Sikh masses providing more and more supply of extremists.

**Confrontation with the Sikh community, as distinct from confrontation with the extremists and terrorists, must stop because such a confrontation will mean disturbances and unrest for years. The disgruntled and bewildered Sikh youth should be won over by love and understanding while the hardened terrorists should be dealt with by lawful methods, however harsh this treatment is necessary.**

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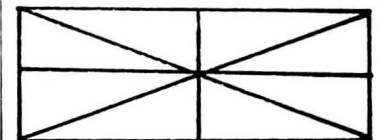
5. Another bluestar or woodrose would be extremely unproductive; in fact that would harden the resolve of the misguided and provide fuel to their propaganda that



Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

Sikhs cannot expect justice and law must rule.

6. Sikh community as a whole must not be maligned. In fact their contributions to the building up of India must be highlighted and acknowledged. This will help isolation of terrorists. The like of Bal Thackeray should be curbed because that would ensure the interest of the Sikhs outside Punjab in the unity of the country.



## The Dilemma Continues

(Form our Special correspondent)

**H**as the new Akal Takht chief, Mr. Jasbir Singh Khalsa (he perfers the surname Khalsa to Rode) has gone the way of his predecessor, Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi and failed? It is too early to answer this question, though some critics have come to the conclusion that he endorsed the demand for Khalistan at the convention called by him at Damdama Sahib on Baisakhi day. It will be uncharitable to come to this conclusion so soon, though he is still to define what he means by "Pooran azadi" (complete freedom) for the Sikhs.

The convention at Damdama Sahib proved to be an anti-climax. The Akal Takht chief had given hopes of making an important announcement about the next programme of action and it was

feared in some quarters that a strident demand for Khalistan would be made there. Nothing of the kind has happened. Mr. Khalsa made no new announcement, a part from forming a committee for the unification of the two factions of the All India Sikh Students Federation, the Manjit group and the Gurjit group. Surrounded as he was by militants all around, he did the tight rope walking and by his balancing acts he was pleased neither the militants nor those in power in Delhi. In fact, his position is most unenviable. Even though a tilt towards the militants was discernible, he advocated tolerance, fresh thinking on the goals set by the militants, unity among the panth and so bragging about the sacrifices made for the cause. The reference was obviously to some

of the militant outfits who have been boasting about their sacrifices for the Panth.

### The Goals

**B**ut such coolness was not found in the speeches made by the militants. On the contrary the statement of Mr. Gurjit Singh, president of one faction of AISSF, read out on his behalf, made no ambiguity about the goal of the Sikhs, i.e., Kalistan. In fact, the statement said that his group would have nothing to do with those wanting settlement within the framework of the Indian constitution. Some observers have pointed out that Mr. Jasbir Singh has yielded to the pressure of Mr. Gurjit Singh by making him convener of the committee appointed





# Jodhpur Detenuees Release Myth and Reality

(From our correspondent)

**T**he release of the 40 of the Sikh detenuees (including tow women) from Central Jail of Jodhpur on 4 March last, who had been in jail for nearly 4 years (since June, 1984) without trial, once again underlines the total illegality and lack of justification of their continued detention, and the necessity for the immediate release of all the remaining 326 Jodhpur undertrials, including G S Tohra, the President of S G P C, Manjit Singh, and Harminder Singh Sandhu - President and Gen Secy respectively of the AISSF.

**Background :** The People's Union for Civil Liberties, and the People's Rights Organisation, have for sometime now been protesting against the continued illegal detention of the Jodhpur Detenuees without trial, and had started a public campaign for their release through newspapers, articles, seminars and dharans etc.

The interest and involvement in the matter was recently accelerated when the parents and the near relatives of the detenuees informed us that their cases were being unnecessarily delayed, the trial had not even started, the undertrials were being subjected to abominable prison conditions and discriminatory treatment in the matter of meetings and interviews etc.

With a view to inspect the jail conditions and to interview some of the undertrials and to prepare the grounds for filing a Writ Petition in the Supreme Court of India demanding their release a team of civil liberties activists visited Jodhpur twice recently on 19 and 27 February last. The team was lead by Mr V M Tarkunde, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India and Advisor PUCL, and comprised Dr Aurobindo Ghose, Convenor P R O, and a lecturer at the K M College (Delhi University) Mr T S Ahuja and Mr Navtej Singh, Advocates in the Delhi High Court.

V M Tarkunde, T S Ahuja and Navtej Singh, advocates, were able to interview some 20-25 of the undertrials, including two women prisoners, whereas orders on the application of Dr Aurobindo Ghose and Harminder Singh, lecturer of SGTB Khalsa College (Delhi University) to meet and interview the undertrials were Reserved for 8 March.

## Report on Visit to Jodhpur Jail:

(1) **Case:** The 366 undertrials, including Mr G S Tohra, who have come to be known as Jodhpur Detenuees, were arrested in June, 1984, at the time of the Operation Bluestar. They were detained in the first instance, under National

Security Act (NSA) and thereafter they are kept as undertrials at Jodhpur Jail, in case No 1/85, arising out of FIR No 182 of 1984, of Police Station, division 'B' Amritsar, dated 5 June 1984. At the time of their arrest, about 50 of the Sikh boys were less than 14 and 15 yrs. of age and around the same number of person, are of the age group of 55-60 years. About 23 of the prisoners have gone mad during the period of their detention in jail.

(2) **Trial :** Apart from filing of the chargesheet, U/Sec 173 of Cr P C, no progress in the trial has yet taken place, and the case is pending in the Court of Sh Khem Chand Sharma, the Addl Judge, Special Court, Jodhpur. The copies of the list of witnesses or their statements have not, as yet, been supplied to the undertrials till date. The challan filed in the Court had been sealed, and the proceedings have also been stayed by the Supreme Court of India since 11 July 1985 in Criminal Appeal No 465/85 filed by the State, against the orders of the Court on 8 May 1985.

**Living Conditions:** All the detenuees are kept in four barracks, about 90 to 100 in each barrack. They are not allowed to meet each other and are also not allowed to wear turbans over the length of 2 to 2-1/2 feet. Diet given to them is not good and there is also acute shortage of water to them, in the barracks No 'B' class facilities are provided to those who are entitled to such facilities as per Jail Manual. Transistor, TV or radio facilities are also denied Only censored newspaper are provided

to detenuees from which all new relating to Punjab is delect.

During the course of interviews by the advocates the detenuees informed that the behaviour of the jail officials and CRPF personnel was discriminatory and inhuman. According to them, they were being treated as Prisoners of War of some alien country with double legal and administrative yardsticks being applied to them. They complained that they are referred to as extremists which they denied and strongly resent. The detenuees, attitude towards the continuing violence was clearly stated by Mr Harminder Singh Sandhu, in his letter dated 13 Jan 1988, from jail to Js Tarkunde and Dr Ghose, that "...I am deeply perturbed over the happenings in Punjab - I don't approve of merciless slaughtering of innocent people either. It is at the hands of some reckless band of Sikh youths or it is committed by security forces who are perniciously resorting to extra judicial executions. State terrorism is the worst phenomenon, particularly in a democratic and welfare state. "Mr Sandhu further stated"...Is it not a lack of vision and farsightedness that while our own Guard Arm (Punjab) is fostering wounds in our body without any treatment we have taken the onus of establishing peace in Sri Lanka. How long the ruler at Delhi can continue to utilise security forces and afford the Punjab (granary) to develop into a volcano. Despite our positive attitude and willingness to set and talk on Punjab, the Govt has shown scant sincerity in this regard and rather the Prime minister, through his mercenary emis-

saries, has attempted to make us surrender our conscience.."

**Interviews:** No relatives and friends are allowed to meet the detenuees except the parents, brothers and sisters. Though the meetings with the prisoners are governed by the jail manual, which stipulates that the interviewers are to stand across the iron net, keeping the prisoners on one side in a cage. However in the case of the Sikh detenuees at Jodhpur Jail, meetings and interviews have to be held in a most inhuman manner. The interviewers and the detenuees are kept in separate cages, having a gallery of about 8 feet between the two cage/barracks, which are fully covered by iron nets upto the roof. It becomes difficult to hear each other. Sometimes it is difficult even to recognise the persons standing on the other side.

The relative, who wishes to see the undertrials, has to file an affidavit stating his relationship with the undertrial. The minor children are not allowed to meet their father, as they are incompetent to swer an affidavit.

The relatives who wish to see their child, and have to travel over a distance of more than 600 km one side, are subjected to physical and moral humiliations. They are subjected to personal search at more than three places before they enter the jail. All their belongings including the sweets and eatables they bring for the detenuees are minutely checked and unparliamentary remarks and abusive language hurled at them during the search and their stay in

the jail premises. When passing through all such hardships they reach the place of interview, they are kept in a cage/barrack having about 8' distance from the barrack, where the prisoner is kept for the purposes of interview. They cannot hear each other properly as they have to shout loudly. The persons coming from the distance of over 600 kms can hardly hear the voice of the detenuee. Sometimes it becomes even difficult to recognise the person standing on the other side.

**Medical Facilities:** The detenuees also complained of inadequate medical facilities. The medicines are not available and the specialists do come for checkup, but the medicines recommended are not provided to the detenuees and, if available are given after a lapse of above fifteen days. One of the two women, released recently, Mrs Pritam Kaur, has a bullet in her chest as she was injured during the Operation Bluestar. The same has not yet been removed. About 150 persons have developed major diseases, which they did not have at the time of their arrest. About 23 persons have gone mad, during the period of detention due to the physical and mental torture caused by jail officials, particularly the CRPF personnel who, upon slightest excuses, train their guns over the boys and drag by their beards as if they are the Prisoners of War.

**Restrictions on Academic Pursuits:** A large number of detenuees have been continuing their studies inside the jail despite the discouraging attitude of the jail officials. The books are not allowed inside the jail, nor is there any library facility for the detenuees. Many of the boys have completed their graduation and Mr. Harminder Singh Sandhu, who did MA in History, has been granted permission for doing PhD. The jail authorities have subjected him to the condition that neither he would seek permission to go out for academic session nor his guide would be allowed to visit him in jail. Same restrictions have also been placed upon the other undertrials who wish to pursue further studies.

**Demands :** We demand (1) the immediate release of all the remaining detenuees. All of the detenuees are being treated for a single case No. 1/85, arising out of FIR No 182/84. If 40 of them have been released, unconditionally without trial, the remaining persons must also be released immediately.

**Inderjit Kaur, who was caught in the cross-fire during Operation Bluestar, spent 45 months in the jail.**



Photo Courtesy-India Today



## Jodhpur

(2) Till the time they are released, they should be provided with better and proper facilities, as provided in jail manual, including facilities to interviews, uncensored newspapers, magazines and library facilities with TV and radio facilities. They should also be provided good diet, regular and proper medical attention. 'B' class facilities be also provided to those who are entitled to the same. They should be treated as political prisoners.

(3) The practice of keeping the undertrials in cages during the time of their appearance before the Court be discontinued and they should be kept in such a way that they should be able to witness the court proceedings properly and can address the Court when required and should also be able to communicate with their advocate, if necessary, without any interference of jail officials and harassment by the intelligence persons.

The interfering and threatening attitude of the CRPF personnel in the day-to-day lives of the undertrials should immediately be discontinued.

(5) Proper facilities be provided to the undertrials for continuing their further academic studies.

(6) All such discriminations in the treatment and provision of facilities between the other undertrials and the detainees must immediately be ended.

(7) The undertrials be transferred to some place in Punjab or nearest place so as to save their kins and kiths from travelling all the way from their places of the jail and the inhuman behaviour with the interviewers be stopped.

**Issued on behalf of PUCL & PRO by Mr V M Tarkunde, Dr Aurobindo Ghose, Mr T S Ahuja and Mr Navtej Singh, Advocates.**



Photo Courtesy India Today

**The silver-haired Makkan Singh, released recently, fears that many prisoners will lose their mental balance.**

## 'People's rights snatched away'

The people ought to have been given an opportunity to discuss the 59th Amendment before it was made into law. Expressing this view at a seminar on the subject here on Friday under the aegis of the All India Lawyer's Union, Mr. P.S. Potti, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court, pointed out that "by not having a national debate on such an important issue one could see the erosion of Constitutional values and civic rights taking place today."

Mr. Potti, called for a fair operation of democratic norms within the parameters of the Constitution. He urged the Press to vigorously take up the issue and educate the masses on the grave implications of the Amendment.

Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, MP, wondered how additional powers conferred through an Emergency on an all-powerful administration would help in solving the Punjab problem. The real intention of the Government was different, he argued, and by passing the 59th Amendment, the Government was actually trying to snatch away people's rights.

There is the danger that the Government might use the Emergency powers to bring under its control other parts of the nation, besides tampering with the duration of Parliament. The tenure of the Lok Sabha can be extended at the will of the Government.

Blaming the Government for a "disinformation campaign," Mr. Rajinder Sachar, Senior Advocate, said when the 59th Amendment was passed the nation was told that it was meant only for Punjab when actually its provisions contain alarming portents for the rest of the nation. India, he explained, is a signatory to the 1979 international civil and human rights covenant which though allowing the imposition of Emergency under special circumstances did not allow for the snatching away of certain rights such as of life and liberty.

Mr. Dania Latifi, Senior Advocate, said the citizens have been "de-citizenised" through this extreme measure that seeks to take away the life and liberty of the people enshrined in Article 21.

## District Redressal Forum for Delhi Approved

The Central Government has approved the constitution of the District Redressal Forum for Delhi under Section 9(a) of the Consumer protection Act, 1986.

This approval of the Central Govt. has been conveyed in a

letter of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies, Department of Civil Supplies, Govt. of India, addressed to Sri Jag Parvesh Chandra, Chief Executive Councillor. It is because of the exclusive initiative taken by Shri Chandra that the Union Territory of Delhi

was the first in the country to have a Consumer Protection Council and now it will be the first to set up the District Redressal Forum under it.

Shri B.N. Chaturvedi, sitting Additional District Judge Delhi will be the President of the District Redressal Forum whereas Dr. A.N. Saxena (Commerce) and Mrs. Mohini Giri, a consumer activist, would be the other members.

Expressing happiness at the Central Govt. approval to the Delhi's District Forum, Shri Chandra said, that redressal of con-

sumer complaints is the main plank of the Consumer Movement. With the formation of the Forum the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 would acquire teeth in its implementation in Delhi. While on the one hand the manufacturers/dealers would be doubly cautious not to push through defective or substandard material, on the other hand the Consumer would have an opportunity for removal of the defect or replacement of the defective goods or for getting compensated, the Chief Executive Councillor, added.

## Love Insurance Against "Bridegrooms"

In his recent communication to the Chief Executive Councillor, Shri Jag Parvesh Chandra, Shri R. Narayanan, Chairman of Life Insurance Corporation has said that he is getting the very interesting suggestion for a new life insurance plan to be gifted to the bride by her father-in-law is being examined in detail as to its feasibility and related technical parameters.

It may be recalled that the suggestion was made by Shri Chandra while speaking at a Conference on Dowry organised jointly by Delhi Bal Manch, All India Reghgar Women's Organi-

sation and Lions Club, Delhi (Up Town). He had said that Love Insurance would prevent heart breaks and dowry deaths and would also provide total legal protection to Indian women from the clutches of opportunistic "Lovers". The Policy would require the husband to treat her wife well, otherwise the Insurance Money would go to the wife.

Calling the demands made by bridegrooms for dowry as a "Marriage Black Market", he had said, such bridegrooms should be condemned as "bribe-grooms."

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# Punjab: An Unpopular View

Amrik Singh

**T**he phenomenon is not an unknown one; it occurs ever so often in the life of nations. Once in a while, some of them get into a situation where to persist with a wrong policy is difficult and going back on it is even more difficult. Two recent examples that come to mind are those of France in Algiers and USA in Vietnam. In both cases a particular policy was pursued and taken as far as it could be. But then it became clear to some of the more far-seeing people that to persist with that policy would be an act of folly and, in the sense, counter-productive. I submit that the Punjab situation is an example of this process at work.

Some people will argue that the analogies given above are inadmissible, in both cases the larger country had invaded the smaller country. Morally speaking, they had no right to be there. If the local people offered resistance, it was not without justification therefore. In plain words, fighting imperialism was the proper thing to do and it was just as good that the occupying countries were made to withdraw.

## Part of India

**P**unjab however is very much a part of India and there is no question of a foreign power occupying that part of the country. This is correct but in the constitutional sense only. In moral terms the majority of people in that state look upon the Centre as an external force which is engaged in subduing the local population. This is the perception of a substantial section of the population.

As would be readily acknowledged, this is the perception mainly of the Sikhs in that state; it is not the perception of the rest of the population. To that extent the statement made above may be qualified but then an equally pertinent question to ask is why should the bulk of the Sikh community feel like this? How is it that while the feeling of alienation was found only in a small section of the Sikh population some years ago, today the bulk of the community thinks differently?

While some of them have committed excesses and perpetrated violence, can it be said with any show of reason that the State, however we choose to define it, has not acted in an equally brutal and barbaric manner? There is enough evidence to support the assertion that violence has been met with violence with the result that, today, neither side can claim that it has acted always correctly and within the bounds of the law. In fact, the law has been violated with impunity by everyone concerned.

## The Policy

**W**hat do we do in this situation? Shall we have more of the same? This seems to be the accepted policy of the government. The recent discussion in Parliament has not thrown up any new ideas. Nor has it brought forth an alternate strategy to deal with the problem. If things continue as they are, and this is what appears to be more likely than otherwise, the situation after a year would not be particularly different. Innocent people will continue to get killed and the law and order agencies will continue to ride roughshod over the rights and liberties of private citizens.

**What is happening in Punjab is going to affect the Indian polity much more adversely than is realised today. For several years now, Punjab has been governed by a whole series of black laws. This extinction of civil liberties in one part of the country cannot but cast its baleful shadow over the rest of the country. But for the vigilance of the Opposition, the 59th Amendment would have been made applicable to the whole country and there is no knowing what will happen tomorrow. The response of the government is, to a large extent, determined by the various pressures exerted upon it and those are of a diverse and wasteful kind. Punjab then becomes the occasion either for a diversion or a counterattack and this is a prospect which no sane Indian should welcome.**

## Changing Situation

**F**urthermore, the geopolitical situation is changing rapidly. After the Russian withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan, the Indo-Pak border will suddenly come alive. In that event, is it in the interest of the country to have a sullen and hostile population on the border? In the recent debate in Parliament a good deal of attention was paid to the alleged subversive role of Pakistan. The question to ask is, is it a new discovery? Pakistan has been fishing in troubled waters for quite some years. This has been known all along. Only this factor becomes less visible than otherwise in certain situations. Once it becomes less visible, most people tend to forget about the unsettling reality. Private citizens forgetting is one thing; it seems as if the government too forgets about it.

There is ample evidence available to show that measures to counter interference by Pakistan have been urged upon the Central government persistently by almost all political parties and by whoever was running the administration in Punjab. This was done by the Barnala Government and this has

been done recently and repeatedly by the Governor. If the government is unable to do much about it, one has to go deeper into the question of why thus is this paralysis of will.

## Basic Issue

**T**o return to the basic issue. It needs to be asked why is it that despite all that has been tried over the years, nothing has worked in Punjab. For more than a year now, the Centre has had unrestricted powers. Paramilitary forces have been inducted into that state on a massive scale. Military support is also there in the background though it was only recently that it has been proposed to make greater use of it. In plain words, if the situation in Punjab has deteriorated over the years, it is not for lack of resources or the willingness to carry out repression even in disregard of the accepted norms of civilised government. It is possible to bring in larger forces, have greater firing power and do a dozen other things. But the point at issue is: will all this yield the required results? The answer is an emphatic NO.

Why not YES? There are very good reasons for such a statement. The experience of the last few years shows clearly that while the government talks big its performance has been predictably poor. With every attempt made to contain terrorism, it has become more and more lethal. Never was the rate of killings so high as during the recent months. This happened when everything in the state was controlled, in fact literally so, by the Central government. Every single decision taken there was subject to the approval, if not the veto of the Centre, and yet the state became more and more ungovernable. So much so that while the power to impose an emergency in the state has been

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taken by the Centre all that remains is to actually put it under emergency. What next? Does all this flurry of activity make one feel confident that what the government says will get done?

## The Contrast

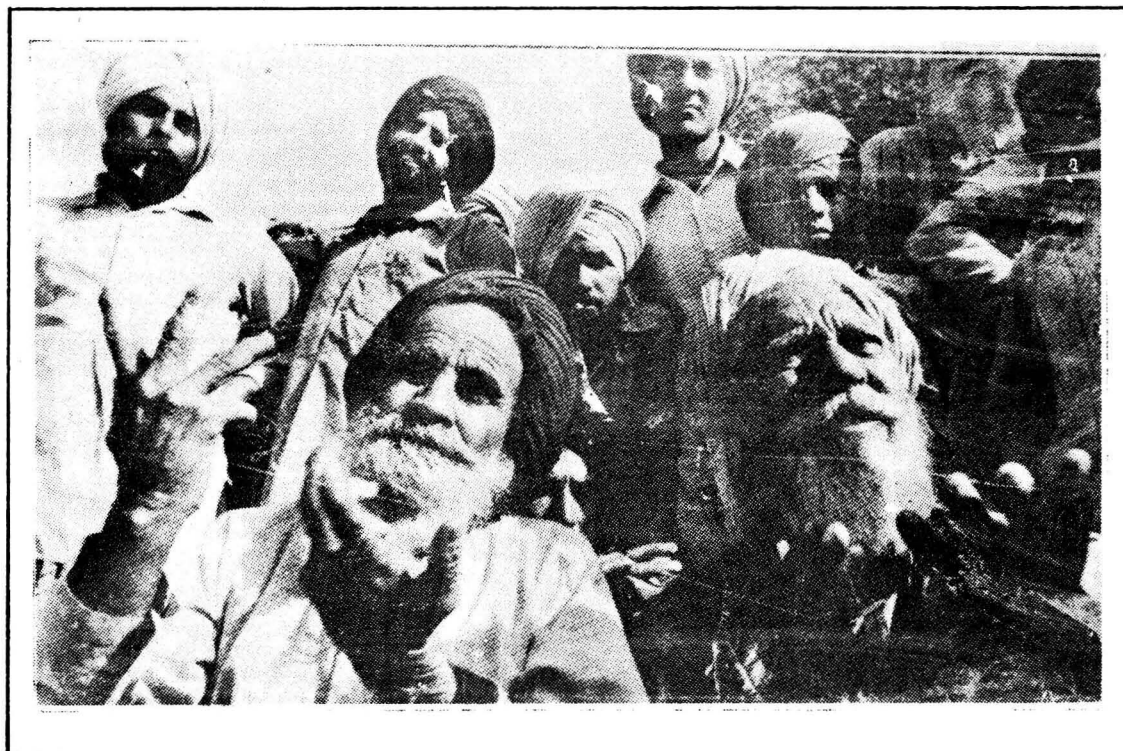
**T**he plain fact is that it is an unwinnable situation. Everything that could have been done has been done, including unabashed violation of the rule of law. And yet nothing has happened to change the situation on the ground. This single factor should make any person with an open mind re-examine his assumptions. But what we read in the press and what we see on the television is in total contrast to what obtains on the ground. It is amusing to read and watch those people who wax eloquent on the need to crush terrorism; they have been talking like this for years. What they are not prepared to do is to learn from their experience.

Should then there be a surrender to terrorism? The question is well put and it needs to be answered. The proper answer to this

question is that to talk of surrender to terrorism is to go about it the wrong way. The right question to ask is; why terrorism? Is it only because a set of misguided people have taken to it more or less as a way of life, or are there any other the State Emporia. The Admini-reasons also? Apart from that, how is it that despite all the efforts being made, terrorism has not been contained and is growing in scope and virulence. Unless some of these questions, and there can be many more of them, are raised with an unencumbered mind, the right answers would not be forthcoming.

While there is a good deal more that can be said on the subject (for instance, the total absence of communal strife) it need not be said because the problem is not the adequacy or otherwise of explanations for what is happening.

**The problem is that a large number of people have allowed themselves to be brain-washed into believing that the Sikhs (the blurring of distinction between the Akalis and the Sikhs**





The problem is that a large number of people have allowed themselves to be brain-washed into believing that the Sikhs (the blurring of distinction between the Akalis and the Sikhs requires to be noted) are a blood thirsty lot and there is no other way to deal with them except to put them in their place. The November 1984 killing was an expression of some such notion; it had been spread sedulously over the preceding couple of years. Of course the terrorists had amply contributed to the projection and propagation of such a notion but it would be a travesty of facts to say that that was the only factor in the situation.

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### Negative Image

The terrorists draw their support and sustenance from the negative image of the Sikhs as projected by the mass media and other sources. Furthermore, ever since things went berserk, the forces of law and order have responded, as they usually do, in a totally lawless and arbitrary manner. What bothers people in Punjab is not the decisions taken in the secretariat or even at the district level. What makes their life miserable is the day to day harassment by the police and the rest; the police will not do even the right thing i.e., combat the terrorists, unless they are paid for it. Sometimes even that does not help, for they are worried about their own security and turn a blind eye to what is happening around them. The average man therefore has no protection against high-handedness and extortion.

It must be said to the credit of J. Roberio that he tried to infuse professionalism into the police force. To some extent he even succeeded. But in a situation where nobody is prepared to go to the roots of the problem and the attempt invariably is to gloss over the crimes and atrocities committed in the past, there is total loss of public confidence in the fairness and professional role of the state apparatus. Nothing that the Centre or the State government might do or will be able to do will change this situation; collousness and corruption are built into the system and there is a close nexus between Crime and corruption. Officers have come and gone and so will Roberio one of these days. It is this reality of life as well as a certain degree of fundamentalism but, above all, an all-pervasive sense of injustice that has given birth to terrorism and keeps it going.

### Injustice

While little can be done to reorient the police and other agencies in the

short run, the starting point for any change of gear will have to be to remove the sense of injustice which weighs upon the minds of most people. This is not the occasion to go into details but surely this implies, most unambiguously, a reversal of the policies being followed so far. The chances of such a step being taken are remote but that is not enough reason to keep quiet and not say loud and clear that the policies being followed today are wrong and high handed and require to be reversed.

To reverse a policy which has considerable mass sanction behind it requires statesmanship of a high order such as J. Jayawardene gave evidence of in Sri Lanka, for example. Let everyone who reads this piece decide for himself if, in the existing political

set up, the issue can even be posed in the manner posed above, let alone considered in positive terms.

Unless there is a reversal of the policies followed so far, Punjab will continue to bleed and the situation will continue to deteriorate. In regard to our China policy, to take an analogy, it is widely recognised today that, to quite an extent, the conflict with China could have been avoided. Despite the prodigious price that has been paid over the years, the dominant approach still is, "How can we let down Pandit Nehru! Something of the same kind is happening in respect of the Centre's policy towards Punjab as well. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the sentiment is, "How can we let down Indira Gandhi! As long as this approach continues to determine decision making, the situation is

not likely to undergo any change, except for the worse.

Is it not time to raise some basic issues with regard to the wisdom of what has been done over the years? Indira Gandhi after all was not infallible. For instance, was her choice of Giani Zail Singh as the President of the country such an inevitable or obvious one? Did she not commit a serious error of misjudgement? This is only one minor example of where she went egregiously wrong. In regard to Punjab her policy was not only wrong, it was utterly and wantonly wrong. This is what needs to be acknowledged. But will it be?

SSSSSSSS



Police lathicharge volunteers of the Indian People's Front who were protesting against the 59th amendment of the Constitution in Patna on Tuesday.—TOI photo

## Review of Centre-State relations demanded

A private member's resolution calling for early review of the Centre-State relations to make the concept of federalism "more meaningful" received wide support from the Opposition members in the Lok Sabha today.

The ruling party, however, opposed anything that might "weaken" the Centre.

The Opposition members made it clear that they wanted greater autonomy for the States and decent-realisation of decision making along with a "strong Centre".

Moving his resolution, Mr. H.M. Patel (Janata) said some of the major irritants in the Centre-State relations concerned sharing of resources, regional disparities and the role of Governors.

As States feel disgruntled it was the duty of the Centre to remove this feeling and "to work with the States in a spirit of cooperation, understanding and accommodation," he said.

Referring to the role of Governors, Mr. Patel expressed concern over the manner in which the Centre was reaping political benefits out of this office. Governors were envisaged by the Constitution framers to be neutral and wise persons whose paramount duty was towards the proper administration of the States.

Mr. Patel also spoke of the pre-eminent position given to the Planning Commission and not to the Finance Commission.

While the planning body was envisaged to ensure uniform

development of the country, the Finance commission was to look after the resources needed by the States. But today the Planning Commission has assumed all powers and this had created difficulties for the States.

Mr. Harish Rawat (Cong-I) said it was unfortunate that some States, instead of working in close cooperation with the Centre, were attacking democratic institutions like the office of the Chief Justice and the Election Commission. It was the responsibility of the

Opposition-ruled States to ensure that the federal structure of the country was preserved.

Mr. V. Sobhanadreeswara Rao (TD) said the Centre-State relations had to be raised to a "fraternal" level from the present one of inequality. Strong States would automatically firm up the sovereignty and strength of the Centre, he said.

Mr. Dinesh Goswami (AGP) likened the India Polity to "a flower which sheds its fragrance if any of its petals dries up."—UNI

THE  
**FORUM**  
GAZETTE

Minority Rights  
Civil Liberties  
Equality for women  
Democratic Values  
Environmental Protection



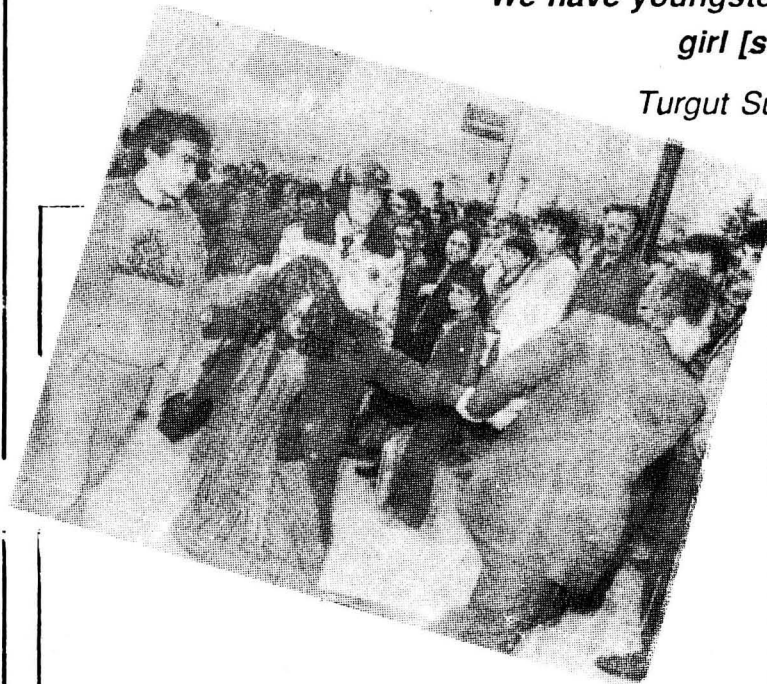
# Ill-treatment of w

"We have youngsters aged 20 and 21 at our  
girl [sexually] ... why should the

Turgut Sunalp, former General of the



"One of the interrogators hit my head against the wall and covered my face with a bag during the course of interrogation. They did not allow me to sleep for eight consecutive days. One of the interrogators threatened to take off my clothes. When I started to vomit and bleed, they claimed I was putting on an act. I told them I was pregnant but they refused to bring me a doctor. Later, I was told a doctor would be allowed to see me only if I confessed." Naila Ayyesh, a Palestinian living in the West Bank, (above) alleges she suffered a miscarriage as a result of the treatment she describes here.



Hundreds of students were arrested in Turkey in April 1987 after demonstrations against restrictions on student associations. One student later testified that she had been tortured in prison.



Santa Huwajab, a 29-year-old Syrian woman, was arrested in 1987 by Syrian Military Intelligence, severely tortured. A member of the Syrian Arab Republic, she had been sought by the Syrian government in Damascus, without charge or

**T**housands of prisoners around the world suffer conditions which violate internationally recognized human rights standards and often constitute torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment. Both men and women experience such treatment. Women in custody, however, may be more likely to face forms of abuse such as rape, sexual assault and sexual humiliation.

The victims include women of all ages, from all walks of life: trade unionists, agricultural workers, journalists, physicians, lawyers and social, religious or community workers. Some are in the forefront of social and political change and many are community leaders. Others are victims of human rights violations because they happen to be the wives, mothers, daughters or friends of those considered "dangerous" by the authorities. Neither are pregnancy or old age any guarantee against ill-treatment.

In Paraguay, a 21-year-old woman was allegedly struck and dragged out of her home despite being four months pregnant, and unwell, when she was arrested in August 1987. She subsequently miscarried in prison. It is believed that the police went to arrest her husband, who was in hiding, and that she was then detained because of the political activities. A mother of three children, she was released on 24 December.

## Israel

Naila Ayyesh, arrested in Israel and the Occupied Territories on 19 February 1987, alleged that she suffered a miscarriage as a result of ill-treatment under interrogation. In an affidavit to her lawyer she said that she was hooded, left outside in bitterly cold weather, and that her head was knocked against the wall. She said she was denied medical attention when she

was bleeding and vomiting and that she miscarried in detention. She was later released on bail to await her trial. Her allegations are to be investigated by the authorities.

The ill-treatment meted out to an old Iranian woman imprisoned in Evin Prison, Tehran, in 1982 was later described by a fellow inmate: "She had helped her sons to escape via the roof of her home. She had been beaten so much on the breasts that they were extremely swollen... She was chucked into the cell like a piece of meat and told she should be in hell. The whole cell cried in sympathy because she was so old and ...she had no idea what she had done."

The period between arrest and arrival at an official detention centre is particularly dangerous for women. Arrests may occur in remote areas. Those detained may have to be transported long distances to the nearest detention centre. Rarely will there be witnesses to what occurs. During this period women are at substantial risk of ill-treatment, including sexual abuse.

In India in January 1986, Gunta Behn Ramji, a 22-year-old tribal woman from Sagbara in Gujarat, was stripped in front of a crowd as she was stripped in front of a crowd as she was being arrested. She was roughly handled and raped by four police officers on the way to the police station. She was again assaulted and raped at the police station. She later tried to file a complaint but the police would not cooperate and doctors at the local hospital refused to examine her without written authority from the police. A Supreme Court Commission found evidence of rape and recommended action against police and other officials, but more than a year later, the state

government had failed to take any action against those responsible for her rape and the subsequent cover-up.

## Philippines

In the Philippines in April 1986, over 60 soldiers surrounded and searched the house of a local family suspected of assisting the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The 14-year-old daughter, Rosie Paner, and her friend, Edna Velez, returned from church while the search was taking place. When the soldiers left the house they took the two girls away with them, together with another girl whom they already had in their custody. Witnesses recounted how the soldiers took the three girls about 30 meters away from the house and how they then heard shouts and scream. Later in the day the bodies of the three were found nearby with multiple stab wounds.

The rape or sexual abuse of women in custody is an intentional infliction of pain and suffering, both physical and mental, on the victim. As such, it is a form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and clearly prohibited by international law, as reflected in Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and various articles of United Nations Convention Against Torture. In addition, these practices are generally prohibited by national law as serious crimes. Yet they are common in many areas of the world.

Rape and threats of rape are often used to elicit information or a confession during the interrogation process.

Hundreds of students were arrested in Turkey in April 1987 after widespread demonstrations against restrictions on student associations. One was a young woman, Nilufer Aydur, who gave the following testimony at her trial in May before Ankara State Security Court: "I was taken to Yenimahalle Police Station. My eyes were blindfolded and I was taken to a place I do not know. Here I was stripped naked. First I was hosed with ice-cold water and given electric shocks. They wanted me to sign a statement, but I refused."

"Thereupon they locked me in a single cell with a male student. We were both stripped naked. Under torture they tried to force the student to assault me sexually. As I could not stand it, I agreed to sign that report."

A 19-year-old Chilean woman, Patricia Pen, was arrested by the state security police on 4 September 1986, during a day of protest in Chile. In her testimony she described how, blindfolded, she was taken to an interrogation centre where she was tortured with electric shocks, raped, drugged, and forced to sign statements she was not allowed to read. She was charged and sent to prison where it became evident that she was pregnant as a result of the rape. There were long delays before she received adequate medical attention, even after she began suffering severe pain and bleeding. On 21 November 1986 she was hospitalized as a result of a miscarriage.

In Sri Lanka a female detainee described the condition of another woman after interrogation in March 1986. "She had welt marks all over her body. She could not sit on the floor or squat. When we pressed her for the reason she said she had been stripped naked and the baton which police used

## The UN Commission on the Status of Women

The human rights of women of the subjects being considered by the Commission on the Status of Women held last month, AI said the ill-treatment of women of the examples described.

The Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946. It makes recommendations on issues in the political, economic, social, cultural and educational fields.

After initially concentrating on issues between men and women, recent subjects considered by the Commission include apartheid on the status of communications media and the roles of men's and women's roles.

The Commission is composed of 18 member states of the United Nations. Members are elected on a three-year basis and submit material from individual countries of discrimination and violations of the treaty reporting requirements.

As well as Commission members, observers for other UN bodies, and international organizations.

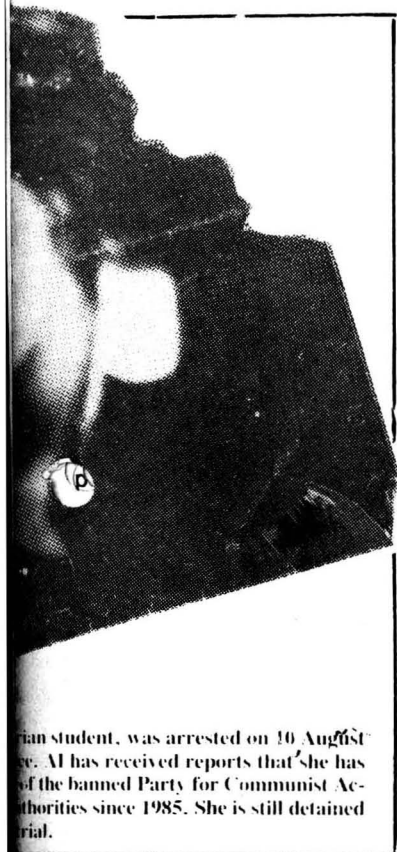
Since being established, several conventions including the International Rights of Women (1952) and the Declaration of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1976).



# women in detention

disposal, hard as a rock. If they want to torture a  
y feel the need for a truncheon?"

Turkish armed forces, October 1985.



ian student, was arrested on 10 August  
ve. AI has received reports that she has  
of the banned Party for Communist Ac-  
thorities since 1985. She is still detained  
trial.



Somalian Safia Hashi Madar has served two and a half years of a life sen-  
tence for "participating in a subversive organization". She was in the ninth  
month of pregnancy when arrested and went into labour the next day. Her  
baby son was taken away after birth and she received no information about  
what had happened to him for two months. AI has received reports that  
she was later beaten and raped in detention.



Mothers of the "disappeared" march in Buenos Aires, Argentina. During  
the "dirty war" in Argentina, 150 children are estimated to have been born  
in secret detention centres or military hospitals and taken from their mothers  
at birth. The mental anguish inflicted on women by taking their children  
from them is a particularly devastating form of cruelty.

## mission on the en

n in detention or prison is one  
dered by a UN commission, the  
of Women. At its annual ses-  
mitted a written statement on  
custody, which included some  
in this article.

ablished by the Economic and  
In 1946 to promote women's  
tations and reports to ECOSOC  
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ing on getting legal equality  
it has broadened its scope:  
have included the effects of  
women and the influence of the  
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the Commission has initiated  
ng the Convention on the Polit-  
and the Convention on the Elim-  
iscrimination Against Women

had been forcibly trust into her  
vagina."

### Elsalvador

**I**n El Salvador a young woman  
was detained by the National  
Guard in April 1987. She  
claimed that she was interrogated  
and tortured for three days, during  
which time members of the  
National Guard threatened to put  
a stick with barbed wire in her  
vagina. Later she was allegedly  
sprayed with an unknown chemi-  
cal which caused her to fall asleep.  
The next morning she could not  
get up because of pain in her back  
and vagina. A forensic doctor later  
found that she had been raped  
and bitten in the genital area.

Rape and sexual abuse are also  
frequent forms of ill-treatment of  
women being held in detention. AI  
has received testimonies from a  
Palestinian family previously living  
in a camp in Beirut. The 16-year-  
old daughter alleged that she was  
beaten by three Amal guards on  
her shins in an Amal detention  
centre in May 1986, and with a  
leather belt all over her body and  
that one interrogator forced a  
coca-cola bottle into her vagina  
and tried to rape her. She also said  
that she was beaten on her head  
with a stilleto heel.

In burma, one woman who  
hereself had been raped also  
described the rape of a second  
woman detainee in November  
1986. "The day following my  
arrest, a young girl, about 15 ...  
was brought to the camp by the

soliders ... she was raped in the  
same room: the four of us were  
sleeping in the same room. She  
screamed at first, but [he] slapped  
her, hit her and raped her in front  
of me. I saw him raping her before  
my eyes. She cried, but because  
she was beaten she did not dare  
to cry and longer."

In Uganda, under a former gov-  
ernment in July 1983, a detainee  
stated that she had been raped  
several times and "also saw many  
other women raped; it was done  
publicly in the presence of other  
prisoners. If the women resisted,  
they were stabbed with knives or  
shot..."

**The mental anguish of having  
their children taken from them  
is a particularly devastating  
form of cruelty for women.**

For the past two and a half  
years Safia Hashi Madar had been  
imprisoned in Somalia for political  
reasons and in currently reported  
to be in solitary confinement. She  
was in her ninth month of preg-  
nancy when arrested and on the  
second day of her detention enter-  
ed labour. She was initially  
denied help by one of the officers  
responsible for her detntion before  
a second officer sought attention  
for her. She was then examined by  
a nurse on whose advice she was  
taken to hospital for the birth. She  
was returned to prison only three  
hours after giving birth. Her baby  
was taken away from her and she  
received no information about him  
until two months later, when she  
learned that both he and her first-  
born son were in the care of her  
family. AI has also received

reports that she was later beaten,  
ill-treated and raped in detention.  
Recent report indicate that she is  
still suffering from beatings on her  
face and body, is malnourished  
and is denied necessary medical  
and dental care. Ten month after  
her arrest she was brought before  
a security court, without legal rep-  
resentation. Summarily tried and  
sentenced to life imprisonment for  
"participating in a subversive  
organization".

During the "dirty war" in Argen-  
tina, when over 8,900 people "dis-  
appeared" according to a  
subsequent government commis-  
sion, 150 children are estimated to  
have been born in secret detention  
centres or military hospitals and  
taken from their mothers at birth.  
Although the fate of the mothers  
is unknown, more and more evi-  
dence has emerged since the  
return to civilian government in  
1983 that many of the babies were  
illegally given to childless military  
couples.

Misuse of prison regulations or  
their insensitive application can  
also result in cruel and degrading  
treatment of women prisoners.  
Strip-searching of prisoners falls  
into this category when it is carried  
out with the deliberate intention of  
humiliating or degrading prisoners.  
In February 1986 AI asked the  
British Government for information  
about reports that women in  
Armagh Prison in Northern Ireland  
were being strip-searched in order  
to degrade and humiliate them.  
The organization asked the gov-  
ernment to respond to claimss that  
there were often five to seven  
warders present during strip-  
searching and that one woman,  
Jacqueline More - who had given  
birth a few week earlier - had to  
remove her sanitary towel and  
breast pads during the strip  
search.

**AI also wrote to the govern-  
ment about allegations that Mar-  
tina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer  
who were held in Brixton  
Prison, London in 1986, were  
being strip-searched in order to**

**to degrade and humiliate them.**  
**These women were allegedly**  
**strip-searched virtually every**  
**day and sometimes up to three**  
**times a day. In a letter written in**  
**March 1986, Martina Anderson**  
**noted: "Friday 8th: Ella had**  
**three strip-searches (two in six**  
**minutes) and one cell-search. I**  
**also had three strip-searches**  
**(two in 25 minutes) and a cell-**  
**search. At times they have**  
**taken one hour and 15 minutes**  
**to carry out of the search."**

Some women may be taken  
into custody and ill-treated in an  
attempt to force them to dis-  
close the whereabouts of a  
family member. Others have  
been tortured to make their  
husband or father talk once he  
is in detention: One man in  
Turkey described the treatment  
of his wife during her detntion  
in 1985: "My wife was taken into  
custody with me. As welll as  
accusations a against her, they  
tried to use her o make me talk.  
They brought ' er in front to me  
with continuous threats of  
underssing and raping her.  
They threatened to insurt Police  
Clubs (into her vagina). They  
beat her severely each time."

### Burma

In Burma, the wife of a man  
suspected of political offences was  
arrested and ill-treated. The pur-  
pose of this was to compel the  
suspect to surrender. She gave  
the following description of her ill-  
treatment. "The first night the  
commander forced me to sleep  
with him. I resisted and he slapped  
me...He asked me to send a mes-  
sage to the village asking my hus-  
band to come the following day to  
the camp, otherwise I would not be  
released. The message was sent,  
and the following day, just before  
dark, my husband surrendered to  
the soliders and was arrested. But  
instead of releasing me as prom-  
ised [the commander] kept me  
for the night and forced me to  
sleep with him once again."



# An Inch And a Half Above Ground

Nirmal Verma



"Please do sit down. There's room enough for the two of us. After all, how much room does a man need? No, you won't be in my way. Not at all; And you don't have to talk to me unless you want to. I am fond of silence myself. In fact, one can talk and keep quiet simultaneously. Of course, very few people know how to do that. But I have been doing just that for yours. No, I don't expect you...you are young. At your age, silence means silence.

an inch and a half above ground

"I notice that you have a small mug of beer before you. I guess you have not caught the disease yet. I can see that you are a stranger to this place. I recognise all the habitués, particularly those who come in at this late hour. One can't talk to them. They are too far gone before they arrive. They come for their last drink because all other pubs are closed. Many of them pass out very soon. I have often helped carry some of them myself.

"Please don't misunderstand me. I was not insinuating anything. You seem to have come here for the first time, and I saw you sitting, all by yourself. That's why I asked you to come over and join me. You need not fear that I will impose myself on you. We can remain alone with our drinks even while sitting at the same table. I concede that it's a bit difficult at my age for every old man is in constant fear. Growing gradually old with dignity is not given to everybody. It is an art that has to be acquired.

"I beg your pardon? My age? Let's have your guess. Oh, no; Of course, I feel flattered.

"I think I will have another drink. What about you? You won't. Well, I can't press you. I believe every man should be free to choose his own life and his own drink, and both the choices can be made but once. Ever after that we just keep repeating them.

"Do you believe in life after death? I hope you won't give me the usual answer about not believing in any religion. I am a Catholic myself, but I am fascinated by your faith—that one does not really die with death...that one has in fact many lives. Often at night I think of this question.

"You can imagine that at my age one does not sleep well. For that one needs a measure of carelessness and half a measure of fatigue. In the absence of both these, one only try to make do with a measure and a half of beer. That is why I come here every midnight, have been doing so for the last fifteen years. Of course, I do get some sleep, but at about three in the morning, I invariably wake up. That's terrible hour. Two means there's still night ahead; four means you start expecting the morning; but at three you are neither here nor there. I have always thought that there is the hour of death.

"I beg your pardon? No, I don't live alone. I have a cat—have had it for years now. Just consider, while I sit here, talking of this and that, she must be waiting for me at the doorstep.

"Isn't that funny? I can't say what you think of it, but it's quite a consolation to me that someone is waiting for me back home. I can't conceive of a person who doesn't wait for someone or for whom someone does not wait. Waiting or being awaited is life.

"Now, these cats can wait for long and with patience. Just like women. There's a great similarity between the two in many other respects, too; both have an extraordinary capacity to attract us and to frighten us.

"Of course, you fear dogs and other animals, too. But that's an inferior kind of fear. You shun the dog and the dog shun you; there's a mutual distrust. But there's hardly any mystery of thrill in that fear, of the kind that you have on seeking a cat or a snake.

"To tell you the truth—and I am

speaking from experience—you can't know a woman or a cat even after a lifetime of companionship, not because they willfully hide things from you, but because you yourself lack the courage to open that door which leads to their inmost mystery. Don't you feel intrigued by the fact that we are generally drawn more towards things that hold us in fear?

"Well, I hope you won't mind my having another drink. They'll close very soon and not a drop will be available in the entire city until morning. Please have no fears. I know my limit. You see, one should be able to rise above ground just about an inch and a half. Not more than that, for otherwise one is likely to keep soaring till one ends up in a police station, which is not too pleasant.

"But there are people who keep their feet planted out of fear. Drinks are wasted on such people. The right distance is an inch and a half. One must always be conscious enough to see one's consciousness going off—like a matchstick, which should be dropped just when the flame reaches the fingers. The secret of good drinking lies in one's ability to stop at the right time. But the problem is that we don't know the right time unless we are already an inch and a half above ground. In other words, knowledge comes with loss of knowledge, or something like that.

"You can laugh it away, if you like. I have tried to learn that the only way of feeling secure is to be ignorant of certain things. But one learns that gradually, even as one learns to live with one's wife, in the same house for years, despite a lurking suspicion that she, too, is playing your game.

"Sometimes you fall in love with a second or a third woman in order to get rid of that suspicion. But it's like a game of chess. You play a hand, and your adversary has an infinity of choices. Well, not exactly an infinity but...choices, all the same. You lose a game and start hoping that you won't lose the next one. You forget that every game

has its own possibilities, as numerous and as mysterious as those of its predecessors. Which is why I believe that, no matter how many women you fall in love with, you really fall in love with the same woman again and again.

"I beg your pardon? Well, no. As I have already told you, I live all by myself, excepting, of course, my cat. Yes. I'm married, but my wife is no more—or at least that's my conjecture!

"You look a bit mystified. It's conjecture because I didn't see her die. As long as you don't see someone die or bury her with your own hands, you can only guess about her death. You may laugh at it, but it seems to me that, short of watching someone die and burying her with your own hands, you are eternally doomed to the hope that she's still alive—that you'll enter the house some day and she'll be there, running out of the kitchen to meet you, wiping her hands on an apron!

"Of course, it's an illusion. In any case this hasn't happened so far. Instead, there's only that cat on the threshold, flashing her eyes at you. I've heard people say that time heals almost everything. Perhaps it does. But I think it doesn't heal so much as it sweeps everything away into dark corners or under the carpet, that its claws are always there to pounce upon you on a sudden, any moment.

"It may be that I'm just talking nonsense. That's thanks to beer—you go astray and then keep going round and round the same spot. You know that game in which children sit in a circle and one of them goes round and round with a handkerchief or something? You have this game in your country, too? Now, isn't that something? No matter what be the distance, children's games are the same everywhere!

"Well, in those days, all of us seemed to be involved in this game. Nobody could be sure when they would leave their trap behind whom on the sly. Each one of us kept looking at his back—just like those children in that game—for the hidden trap."

"Yes, I'm talking of the time when the Germans came to this country. You must have been very young then. Not that I was very old at the time. And I used to be strong then. Not that I was very old at the time. And I used to be strong as a bull and busy throughout the day in my work. There's an age when everybody feels quite satisfied with commonplace happiness, when he doesn't have time to look beyond that, until the time comes when that commonplace pleasure is no more...

"You must have noticed that the thing called happiness is a matter of some particular moments, that

in spite of seeming to be very solid as long as those moments last, it begins to be tasteless and dim like a hangover after those moments are behind you. But the thing called pain or suffering is independent of a particular moment. I mean, at the time of its occurrence, you don't really feel it. I mean, when it occurs, you are just stunned, you can't fit it into a readymade pattern or framework. The occurrence of any accident is one thing, to be able to suffer its full consequences throughout the rest of one's life is quite another. I know it's quite impossible—it doesn't happen. I mean the capacity to imagine oneself in another's place and to go through all that he has gone through. It may be a little more or less, but never exactly the same as the other fellow's suffering.

"You need not rush to conclusions. I'm not suggesting that I saw my wife undergo any torture. In fact, when I reached home that day, they had already taken her away. That was the first time in seven years of marriage that I'd come into the house and she wasn't there.

"The cat? She came much later. The neighbours, I could see them peering out of their windows at me. That was but natural. I myself used to be equally curious about people whose relatives had just been whisked away by the Gestapo in a closed van. But I had never imagined that one day I'd return home to find my wife's room empty.

"Look here, don't you think it's funny that, when we hear of a tragedy—a death or something—or read about it in the morning paper, we hardly ever think that we could or would ever be not a victim? We always reserve tragedies and accidents for others, even in our imagination.

"Wonderful! So you've, after all, come round to having another beer. You can't sit all night with an empty glass!

"I beg your pardon? Well, I knew you'd ask me that. In fact, if you hadn't, it'd have been a surprise. No sir, I didn't quite grasp the situation at first. Didn't I tell you that, when a calamity comes, one is only stunned to being with—stunned and witless, so to speak. I could see all her things scattered around—her clothes, her books, old newspaper. The closets were all open, all sorts of things rifled out of them, lying about on the floor—Christmas gifts, sewing machine, on old album. Well, you know, one accumulates all sorts of things after marriage. It was obvious that they had conducted a very thorough search.

"That night I sat in my room. Her bed was unmade. Under her pillow, I found her matchbox and packet of cigarettes. She used to smoke just before going to sleep. At first, I was irritated by his habit of hers, but gradually I'd got used to it. On a table near the bed was the book she was reading. She had used a hairpin as a bookmark.



The smell of her hair was still clinging to that hairpin.

"You know how one recollects little, insignificant details after years. That's as it should be. Before marriage we think only of big and important things; after marriage and a companionship over years, all these big things slip out of your hands, and you are left with trivial habits, seemingly unimportant routines, little mutual secrets that you cannot share with any one else, but without which you feel absolutely desolate.

"That night I spent alone, surrounded by her things, lost to what had happened. She wasn't there. That I could see. But I couldn't grasp the fact that they actually had taken her away. After all, why my wife? I kept repeating this stupid question to myself all that night.

"You'll be astonished to know that, for the first time in seven years, I suspected her of having kept something from me. Something which she thought had been after her for quite some time, that they had nothing to do with me. Later, I learnt that the Gestapo had discovered some banned pamphlets and papers which used to be distributed among people in secret. And I'd never known about those things! Till that night we had slept in the same bed, had often made love there—and I didn't know her secrets, didn't know that she had any in which I had no share? Doesn't it strike you as funny that they knew my wife better than I did?

"Let me finish my glass and I'll keep you company. It's going to be closing time soon. No, we needn't hurry for one should always enjoy one's drink. We have a saying in our language: We should drink heartily, for in another hundred years we won't be here.

"A hundred years! Quite some one, you'll admit I doubt if either of us will live that long. A man lives, eats, drinks and then the time comes when he is no more. No, sir, it's not death that is terrible. What's really terrible is that the person who dies takes his secrets with him and we can't do anything to him. Hundreds of people die every day without your being any the worse for it.

"That night I kept walking from one room into the other in my house. You'll laugh when I tell you that I, too, subjected my wife's belongings to a thorough search. I could not believe that she wouldn't have left a single trace to suggest that I was a partner of some of her secrets. Her wedding dress, some betters that I had written her before our marriage, some stones and feathers that she used to collect...

"Imagine, I was searching her room just like another secret service man! I couldn't accept the fact that I'd never be able to ask her anything. Of course, I knew that they wouldn't let her off. Nobody they had ever caught had come back. But what terrified me that day was not the certainty of her death, but the uncertainty of my knowledge of her. Death will seal her off for ever against my pro-

bings.

"Next day they come again. I was waiting for them. Had my wife confessed everything, they wouldn't have needed me. But I knew that she wouldn't open her mouth at all. I might have been ignorant of her secret, but I knew her habits. She knew how to keep her mouth shut in the face of all torture, however horrible.

"The first question they asked me was quite straight. Was I so-and-so's husband? Yes, I was. The rest of their questions I knew nothing about.

"But they wouldn't let me off so easily. They were quite derisive about my ignorance of my wife's secret activities. They were sure that I was pretending to be ignorant just in order to save my skin.

"They took me to a solitary cell. And for a week, day and night, they pestered me with the same question in different ways: What did I know about her movements? Who were her colleagues? Who had passed on those papers to her?

"But I won't tell you of the methods they used to extract an answer from me. I won't, because, no matter what and how many details I give, you won't understand.

"Well, they beat me until I was unconscious and then they waited patiently till I was conscious again, and then they beat me again, and so on. They couldn't believe that I knew nothing.

"No, I'm not complaining about the pain their beating gave me; my only pain is that I had nothing to keep back from them. I could tell them only a few very ordinary things, which every husband knows about his wife or shares with her. I had never imagined that she'd been leading a double life all those years—a life apart from me, secretly, in which I had no share at all! Don't you find it a little funny that, if they hadn't arrested her, I would have continued to think that my wife was what I thought she was?

"Those were the last days of the war, you know, and the Gestapo didn't easily release anybody or kill anybody without finding out everything. My wife, it seems, didn't open her mouth unto the last. They had despaired of her, but had hopes that they will succeed in breaking me. They didn't seem to be keen about finishing me off, but short of that, they subjected me to every form of torture imaginable. I didn't admit anything—but that was not out of any sense of courage; the truth was that I had nothing to admit.

"The first night, when I was alone in my house, I kept smarting under the realisation that my wife had kept me in the dark, that she had not considered me worthy of her trust. But later, in the midst of the torturers they put me through, I gradually began to feel grateful that she hadn't told me anything.

"I still can't decide whether I would have had the guts to keep quiet if she had told me her secrets. Just imagine my agony if the choice to admit something had been open to me! You can bear all

suffering when there is no way out.; But suppose you know that you can put an end to your suffering by betraying your wife or your father or your brother or your lover? Suppose you know that? It's hard to say you won't adopt that way after a certain point has been reached in your suffering.

"The freedom of choice is the most painful thing. I feel that my wife had kept me in the dark just in order to spare me the agony of choice. People say that lover has no secrets, that it is transparent. Nothing is more misleading than that. Love does not mean opening oneself; it can also mean concealing oneself so as to keep the other person free from one's own risks. Every woman knows this and,

since she is capable of greater love than man, she has the capacity to conceal herself, too.

"You don't think so? Well, it's quite possible I'm wrong. But, you see, at night, when I can't sleep, this thought is some consolation. Ah, well, I can't understand this. When I asked you to join me I had no hope that I'd be able to make you understand what I feel.

"I beg your pardon? Well, no, I never saw her again. One noon, on my way home, I happened to see that poster. Well, they used to paste those posters every third or fourth day. They carried a list of about thirty or forty persons who had been shotdead the night before. When I saw my wife's name on that poster that day, it

struck me as odd to think that behind that simple name was my wife. I have told you that, until you see someone dying before your eyes, you are not convinced that she is no more. A vague hope persists that when you'd enter a room...

"But let me not repeat myself. Thanks to beer, you keep going round and round the same point—round and round and round.

"You are not leaving? Well, let me buy a few pieces of salami for my eat.

"No, you needn't see me home. It's not too far from here. But I know my limit. Didn't I tell you; just enough to lift you an inch and a half above ground!"

## The Dilemma Continues

Continued from page 5

by him to work out the unification of the two factions of AISSF. By making him convenor, it does not necessarily mean that Mr. Jasbir Singh has endorsed the demand for Khalistan, particularly if one recalls his statement immediately after his installation as Akal Takht chief in which he said that the Centre can give "pooran azadi" to the Sikhs either outside or within India, whatever that means.

Despite the riddles and contradictions in his speeches so far, one can make out the priorities set by Mr. Jasbir Singh. First and foremost is the unity among and Panth and in this regard wants to unite the two factions of AISSF and the militants. His predecessor, Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi, wanted to unite the Akali Dals but failed because of personal and factional rivalries. There are more than a dozen militants organisations, each vying for a leading position among the Sikhs. Whether Mr. Jasbir Singh succeeds in bringing them under a single command remains to be seen. Even if he is able to unite the two AISSF factions, there is the all powerful Panthic committee, led by Mr. Gurbachan Singh Manochal, to reckon with.

### The Unity

The Akal Takht jathedars second objects, after achieving this unity, seems to be to make the militants talk to the Centre and even capturing power somewhat on the pattern of the Assam students. The jathedar has said more than once that the Centre should talk to the militants only to find a solution of the Punjab problem. Negotiations between the Centre and the Sikh militants cannot be ruled out in the distant future. Both the Centre and the militants have made the Akali leaders of both the groups irrelevant in the present context. While the centre has lost faith in the Akali leaders, the militants openly abuse these leaders for having betrayed the Panth by making a deal with Delhi. So what matters in Punjab today is the Centre and the militants or who has got more fire-

power. While the militants believe that power flows from the barrel of a gun, the Centre after trying various experiments has come round to the view that it is only through the gun that terrorism can be rooted out.

In case there was a tacit understanding between Delhi and Mr. Jasbir Singh before he was released along with the other high priests, the Akal Takht chief has failed to deliver the goods. Keeping its options open, the Centre has decided to deal with terrorist menace firmly. First, important administrative changes are being made. The Chief Secretary, Mr. P.H. Vaishnav, has been transferred to Delhi and Mr. R.P. Ohja, till now additional Chief Secretary, Home, has taken his place. The Governor, Mr. S.S. Ray, is having a set of three or four advisers. Mr. J.F. Rebeiro, police chief, will be one of them. Mr. K.P.S. Gill, additional Director General of Police, will take the place of Mr. Rebeiro.

### Security Forces

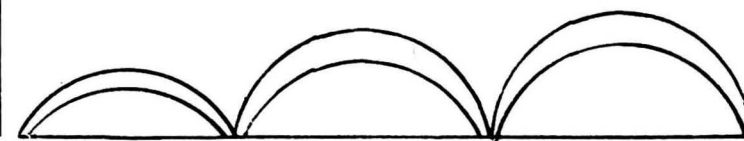
At the same time police administration is being revamped to regain the initiative the security forces had lost to the militants. It has been decided to trifurcate Amritsar 'police district' into three districts of Amritsar, Taran Taran and Majitha. Similarly, Gurdaspur district will have two police districts of Gurdaspur and Batala. A separate police chief will be in charge of these five districts, the idea being to improve police action and patrolling and also boost the police morale. At the same time, the authorities have decided to reactivate village defence and peace committees to mobilise public effort against the terrorists.

Independent observers, however, point out that all these worthy efforts will come to a naught if emergency is imposed in Punjab as this harsh measures will further alienate the people, particularly the Sikhs. Mr. V.M. Tarkunde, eminent

jurist and civil rights activist, speaking on the 59th amendment to the Constitution in Chandigarh the other day pointed out the sinister implications of the government intention to impose emergency in Punjab. He said that Article 19 which gave the freedom of speech, association and assembly, would be automatically suspended. The government could then impose censorship on all publications. Censorship will not only apply to Punjab but to all matters published outside having some connection with Punjab. Article 21 would be suspended in relation to Punjab but it would have implications outside Punjab also. For example, a person in Delhi or Bombay suspected of having some connection with extremists in Punjab can be arrested and even tortured to death without recourse to courts. People living outside would not be able to go to Punjab without a permit.

Mr. Tarkunde asked whether it was proper to deprive people of their human rights to end terrorism in Punjab. He believed that suspension of fundamental rights would encourage terrorism rather than suppress it. He did not think that further repression would improve the situation. On the contrary, it would further alienate the people. He called upon the people of Punjab, both Hindus and Sikhs, to come together and defend themselves against such draconian laws. The need of the hour was to give people more powers to fight terrorism and not take away their rights. No government could fight terrorism by itself. It could do so only with the people's cooperation and for this the people's hands must be strengthened.

With Mr. Jasbir Singh having "failed" the Centre, the ghost of emergency is looming large on the Punjab horizon.





## Book Review

### New Evidence

Social Change and Politics in Punjab 1898-1910  
Enkay Publishers, New Delhi, 1987

by Shymala Bhatia

pp.377 Rs. 123

This compentently well-written book deals with only one decade in the history of Punjab. As the writer says in her preface, the subject was suggested to her by V.V. Misra, a well-known historian of modern India. As the eventual outcome indicates, it was a happy choice. Evidently, from his work V.V. Misra must have discovered that while certain important developments had taken place in this period those developments had not been adequately analysed by any one.

By the end of the 19th century the British had been in occupation of Punjab for approximately half a century. During this period far-reaching changes in the polity and economy of the state had taken place. In fact, the changes introduced by the British after their occupation of Punjab had enough time to induce certain secondary changes and those, in turn, had begun to recondition the social and political structure of the state. According to the author, the book basically examines "The social and political role of the intelligentsia in a colonial society". In support of this approach the cites Edward Shils who had observed that "In no state formation in all human history have intellectuals played such a role". What she does, therefore, is to go into those details which led to the birth of a new intelligentsia and the forces that worked upon them and shaped them into what they eventually became.

While discussing the social scene, for instance, the author goes into details like the spread of education including professional education, literacy by caste, geographical distribution of the educated, female education, the role of the Punjab press, recruitment to the army, colonisation in new colonies, demographic trends and so on. In regard to all these issues, she has gone to the basic data and provided detailed tables such as students on rolls in various colleges, main results of University examinations, literacy by religion, literacy and illiteracy in English and so on. There is a wealth data drawn from primary sources and this kind of detail provides strength to the analysis.

Similarly, she goes into the three reform movements which produce a considerable social and religious ferment in the state. This refers to the Arya Samaj, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Ahmediya Movement. There was not much occasion for her to go into the genesis of the Singh Sabha Movement, for that had started a quarter century earlier.

By the end of the 19th century, the British had revised their policy with regard to the Sikhs and the

Muslims in Punjab. They had won over the Sikhs within the first decade of their occupation of Punjab. In the next quarter century or so, their attitude towards Muslims also underwent a change. Two main reasons are advanced for this change. One was the changing perception of the British towards the Muslims throughout the country. In this respect she quotes two important civilians, Hunter and Thorburn. Sir William Hunter operated on the all-India scale but the latter was a Punjab official and wrote at some length in favour of a different approach to the Muslims. Another important reason for this changing attitude was that the educated Hindus had begun to show signs of political consciousness. While these saw through of the entire country (e.g. the establishment of the Indian National Congress), this attitude was of particular relevance to the Punjab. How did this policy manifest itself. According to the author, two crucial steps were taken. One was to separate the north-west frontier province from the Punjab. This did not evoke any protest as the partition of Bengal, for instance, did.

The second step taken was to adopt new legislation called. The Punjab Land Alienation Act. According to this Act, three important castes (the Aroras, the Baniyas and the Khattris) were prohibited from buying over lands. As one Punjab civilian explained it "The whole act is confessedly an attempt to check results which naturally flow from the educational, legal and fiscal system which we have established in this country. The main pretext for such action is the political danger of the expropriation of the agricultural tribe". It was believed that in consequence of this legislation, the diminishing power of the landed aristocracy would be revived.

It should not be necessary to go into all the details of how this particular act led to social and political discontent, how some kind of a mass movement got generated, how persons like Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh assumed its leadership, and so on. In fact, the agitation against this act and its subsequent amendments etc. constitute the high watermark of political activity in the first decade of the 20th century. The whole sequence if analysed with competence and authority.

For the first time since the Kuka rebellion was crushed some four decades earlier, the British government unleashed repression. The details of those repressions and what preceded and followed it are available in a number of Places the great merit of this Particular Study is that those details are woven into the texture of the book in a manner so as to fortify

the argument advanced in the course of this book. The argument is summed up in the last few pages where she describes Punjab as a land of two streams: nationalism and communalism.

As the author observes:

"The British policy of 'balancing' the communities fully encouraged these divisive trends. Measures such as the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1901 which professedly were economic reform Acts, had a pronounced communal bias demonstrating that as a result of social change in Punjab the interests of Hindus and Muslims had come to lie in different directions".

And again:

"At the same time government also followed a divisive policy not only as regards Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, but also vis-a-vis the urban and rural population. There was a fear of arousing hostility in the army which was recruited largely from the Punjab and many of the soliders had family relations in the Canal Colonies. Therefore, the Government of India intervened and the Colonisation Bill was withdrawn. The enhancement of water rates was also postponed and the agitation died down. The Government of India had adopted a policy of conciliating the substantial peasantry, the bulwark of the British Raj, a policy which it had adopted in the Deccan after the Deccan riots of 1875 and in Bengal also in the 1870s."

Altogether it is a useful study and uncovers a lot of new evidence and weaves it into a coherent argument. The writing is easy

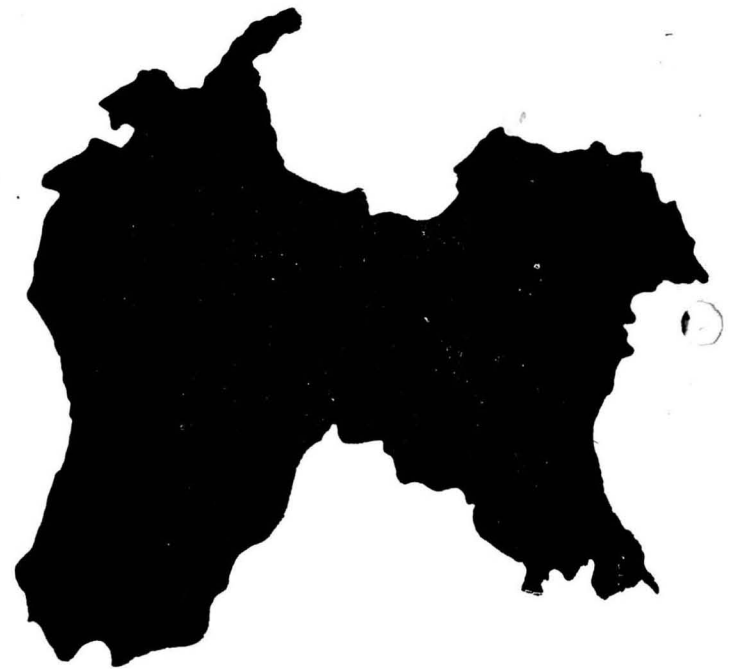
and smooth and the way the argument is built up is cogent and consistent.

The author does not give evidence of having read another book, Political Elite and Society in the Punjab, which deals with some of these issues also. This is referred to because it would have been logical for the author to have pursued this enquiry into the succeed-

ing decades. That has been already covered, it might be a useful idea if she could go back differently with some of the earlier decades, particularly the last quarter of the 19th century. This book should eventually prove to be a fruitful career in research into punjab between 1849 and 1947.

Amrik Singh

## SOCIAL CHANGE AND POLITICS IN PUNJAB 1898 — 1910



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# drought relief work delays and Inadequacies

A report from Banda district (U.P.)

Hazari Singh 'Pankaj'

*There can be few acts more deplorable than withholding the wages of those toiling at drought relief works, resulting in further starvation of those already badly deprived people. Unfortunately this is an all too common malaise at the drought relief works. This is a report on the delays in payments in drought-relief wages in Banda district of U.P., how hungry people fought to get their wages and how a hungry couple were driven to suicide in another incident.*

Patha region of Banda district (Uttar Pradesh) often comes into news due to large-scale distress at the time of drought. At present also this distress prevails on a large scale, and it has been accentuated by numerous inadequacies and delays in the drought-relief work.

On January 27 when the district magistrate came to Manikpur, nearly 500 workers who had toiled at the drought relief work gathered to gherao him "Give us our wages or send us to jail", this was one of their slogans raised again and again.

They were protesting against the non-payment of wages at the drought-relief work on Manikpur-Bargarh link road. This work was taking place under a P.W.D. Engineer who was getting the work done through several contractors, even though the contract system is not allowed in drought relief work. Nearly 500 workers from Gurola, Pata, Sigwa Harijanpur, Sukhrampur, Kesrawa, and Elha villages were not paid their wages for three weeks work. Yet the contractor was forcing the workers to continue the work.

Right through the night the 500 men and women workers continued to surround the bungalow where the D.M. was resting and continued to raise slogans. The A.D.M. gave orders to A.D.M. of Karvi tehsil to bring the engineer to make the payments. A.D.M. brought the concerned engineer (J.E.) but he managed to get away, telling the workers to get their wages from the D.M.

## The Gherao

The gherao and dharna continued during the second day. The workers lay down before the D.M.'s car. The D.M. Again gave orders for the J.E. to be brought. This time both the A.D.M. and the S.D.M. rushed and again managed to bring the J.E. He came, agreed to disburse the money, then slipped away again on the pretext of going to the urinal.

The gherao continued on the third day on January 29. The D.M. as well as the workers were very upset. In the end the district administration had to fall back on the services of a local man of influence and means - a dadu. The dadu found the J.E., got hold of him by the neck and brought him before the anxious gathering. This time he actually started distributing the money. Workers were forced to think - who is more powerful, the D.M. or the dadu? Finally they shouted slogans in praise of the dadu. The D.M. looked on helplessly.

Those workers who had participated in the gherao and dharna were paid at the rate of 2.5 kg grain and Rs. 9 for a 12 feet (12x12x1) ditch while the rest were paid at the rate of 7 Rs. When they demanded equal wages the J.E. said "First gherao the D.M. than ask for that much wage."

There are several examples of delays in payment in Patha region. In Cheriha Bujurg village for bund

construction work the soil conservation department is now making payments after making the workers run around for several weeks. Here also the work has been done through contractors. When the workers here declined to work further empty stomach the contractor carried away some of their on empty stomach the contractor carried away some of their cattle and got a part of their crop destroyed by outside workers. When the Karvi based soil conservation officials were contacted they replied that even though the contractor system has been abolished on paper they are forced to resort to it.

On Gopipur-Ranipur link road the workers were promised Rs. 11.50 per 10 feet ditch but after being made to run around for 3 days in Manikpur town they were paid at the rate of Rs. 8 per ditch.

The forest department is carrying out social forestry work as drought-relief work in Manikpur, Markundi and Bargarh range, where the workers are being paid Rs.1 per ditch a worker can earn hardly Rs. 5 to 7 in this work.

In another context a recent tragic incident needs to be reported. Booda, a tribal youth of Umri village, was about to leave for Patha town in Madhya Pradesh in search of some work. His newly married wife Rampatiya wanted to go with him, but Booda kept saying that when his own subsis-

tence there is uncertain how can he take her with him. When Rampatiya failed to move him, she took her life by throwing herself under

a train. On seeing her dead body Booda also lost his patience and just one hour later, took his life in a similar way.

## Punjabi Stage Punjabi Academy Plays Important Role

Gurmukh Singh Jeet

The Punjabi cultural scenario in Delhi is certainly dominated by the Punjabi Academy. As for the stage it has succeeded changing the concept of Punjabi play from their 'Sapru Housey' character into meaningful and artistic one. There is no occasion now to find fun at the Punjabi plays nor to have a derisive laughter. Quite occasionally good plays are staged which give the audience their fulfilment of expectation.

Recently 'Parayi Kukh' an adaptation of Brecht's play 'They caucasian chalk circle' was staged at the Sri Ram Centre. It was directed by the NSU Alumnus M.K. Raina and was very well received. As a musical play quite difficult to adopt in Punjabi with its original musical score and tunes, was well rendered. Credit for its success was rightly given after its director M.K. Raina, to the main singer Madan Gopal.

The Academy has since jointly organised a seminar on the Punjabi Theatre in national organisation together with the Theatre and Television Deptt. Punjabi University, Patiala, from 17-19 March 88 in the Ficci Conference Hall. Many substantive papers were read, amongst others by Dr. Suresh Seth, Harsarn Singh, Smt. Rama Rattan, Dr. S.S. Nur, Dr. Atamjit, Dr. Navnidra Bahal. The occasion was utilized to stage Late Kapur Singh Ghuman's musical 'Rani Koklan', Ashok Bhattacharyas Punjabi adoptions, 'Kala Suraj'

and 'An evening with New Artists' planned and directed by Suresh Shetty a member of NSD Repertory company for a number of years.

'Rani Koklan' a musical was written and had been earlier directed by the author Late Kapur Singh Ghuman. It is the famous legend of Raja Rasalu and Rani Koklan. The playwright had made ample use of the folklore elements of poetic language, symbols, metaphors in the script, aptly dramatising the eternal human predicament. This famous love legend of Punjab presents many facts of Punjabi culture and it entertains and educates the audience about the tragedy of the women which the women kind is even facing today.

The play was directed by Balraj Pandit, another product of N.S.D. Ustad Prem was the music director. The pivotal role of Koklan was played by Sucheta with credit. Raja Rasalu was ably rendered Darshan Madhok, Darshan Bawa. The folk element played by Paramjit Pal and Surinder as Tota and Kusum Thaman as Maina was appreciated by the audience. The singing of folkry number was very well rendered and reminded of the 'Paryee Kukh', mentioned earlier. All in all, the play was very well received and the Punjabi Academy is to be congratulated for restoring the prestige of the Punjabi drama.

## Public Coffee House in Delhi

Addressing a Press Conference, Chief Executive Councillor, Shri Jag Parvesh Chandra announced here today the decision of the Delhi Administration to set up of Coffee Home aimed to meet the long-felt need of the people for a convenient place where they could meet over a cup of Coffee and have a few snacks at the most reasonable prices. It will also, he said provide a congenial place for journalists, literatures, intellectuals and other professionals to talk things over.

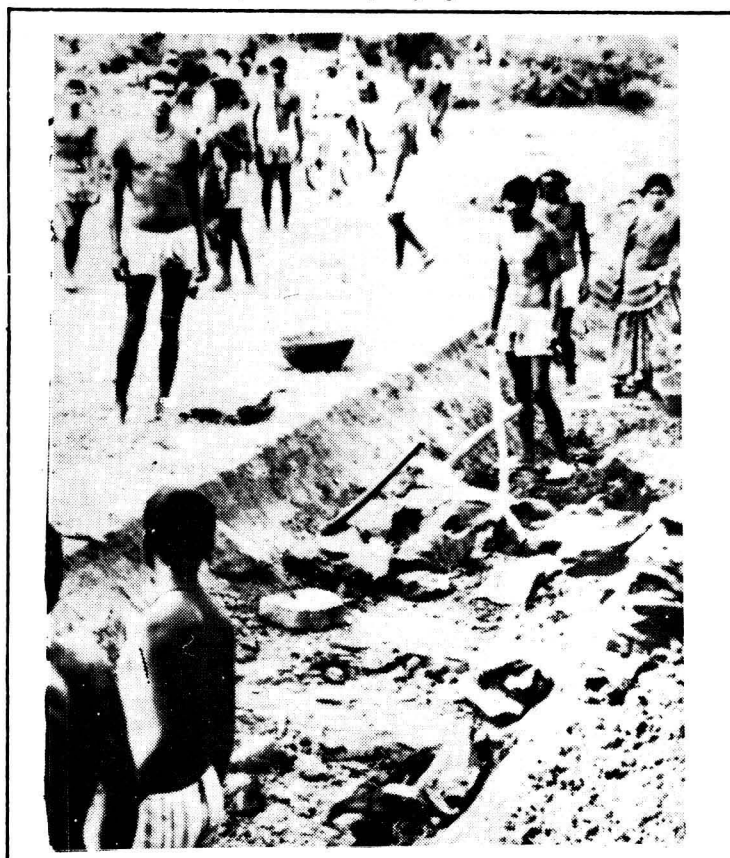
The low-priced Coffee Home, he informed, will be located at Bada Kharak Singh Marg next to station has been able to get a piece of land measuring 800 square yards from the Ministry of Urban Development for the purpose, he added.

Explaining a special feature of the new concept building, which

will be built on the plot, he said, this modern structure will be so designed that noise inside the Coffee Home would be absorbed providing a quieter atmosphere to the user. The building will have a capacity to accommodate about 200 people at a time.

Giving further details, he said, there will be well laid out greenery, consisting of evergreen plants, seasonal flowers of various hues and sweet scented creepers so that people could sip their coffee in a pleasing atmosphere with soft music wafting in the air.

Continuing he said, it is proposed to develop the adjoining vacant space also into an aesthetically designed and landscaped garden, interspersed with seating arrangements. This would enable people to bask in the sun during winters or enjoy summer evenings outside while sipping coffee in a truly relaxed manner.





# Foreign Aid and poverty some aspects - I

## The overall system in which aid operates

By Bharat Dogra

*This 3 - part article examines some aspects of foreign aid's usefulness in fighting poverty in the context of India. In the first part some basic features to the Indian economy are described which any foreign aid effort cannot ignore.*

To understand the role of foreign aid in any country, we have to first look at the economic structure of this country, specially the extent of economic inequalities. In a country where economic inequalities are mainly responsible for large-scale poverty and deprivation and where the government machinery by and large colludes with the resourceful sections to keep down the aspirations of the deprived sections, there is little change of foreign aid being used in ways that will significantly help the latter, rather the opposite may happen in many instances.

In India nearly 60 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture as their only or their main source of livelihood. Inequalities in land-distribution may differ from area to area, village to village, but generally these are quite acute. In most villages a significant part of the population while depending mainly on agriculture for its livelihood does not have any land of its own, instead these people work on the land of others mainly as wage labourers and at some places as sharecroppers. Further, in many villages, even among those people who own land there are further inequalities a few corner a big chunk of the land, while a large number of farmers get only a small share. In some villages inequalities may be less, but in most villages inequalities are quite pronounced.

### Small Farmers

According to the Planning Commission (1985) small and marginal farmers with holdings of land upto 2 hectares represent about 73 per cent of the land holdings but are cultivating only about 23 per cent of the cropped area. Another rough computation of these inequalities is (made by I. Ali, B. M. Desai, R. Radhakrishna and V. S. Vyas in their paper 'Indian agriculture at 2000' published in the annual number of Economic and Political Weekly, March 1981) tells us that 65 per cent of the rural agricultural

population (or nearly two thirds of this population) either does not own any land (about 12 per cent) or else owns less than 2.01 hectares of land (about 53 per cent). Together they operate only 19.4 per cent of the land. In other words 35 per cent of the rural agricultural population operates only 19.4 per cent of the total area operated. At the other extreme households owning over 4.05 hectares of land add up to only 18.6 per cent of all rural agricultural households but together operate 60.4 per cent of the land.

Inequalities also exist in the ownership of other important income earning assets such as milch animals, farm machinery etc. in varying degrees. Exploitation of forest produce and minor minerals is generally patterned to confer the bulk of the benefits on a select few. A big share of the income generated in artisan/craft activities go to a few merchant-middlemen interests.

**This basic reality of the resourcelessness and poverty of a large section of the rural population is doubly important in that the more visible urban poverty is often a reflection of this rural poverty - the urban poor are to a large extent the rural poor driven by the hopelessness of their rural situation to cities and for the same reason willing to work there at low wages (or rather forced into this as there are a large number of poor migrants competing for a limited number of urban jobs).**

Over the years several policies, schemes, programmes aimed at benefiting the weaker sections (with or without attempting to correct these inequalities) have by and large failed to make a significant impact. Despite the existence of a few individuals of exceptional ability and integrity, the administrative machinery dealing with the deprived sections to improve their condition is widely perceived as being ineffective either due to its own corruption or the pressures of powerful vested interests or both. There are several official and non-official reviews which bring out this failure in no uncertain terms. The result is that even today over half the population of India has its base in agriculture, animal husbandry, forests, fishing, quarrying, cottage industry and crafts in such a way that they have to make available their labour on exploitative terms.

### Consumer Goods

In this situation, no matter how much production of consumer goods and infra-structure goods is

stepped up and no matter how high technology is made available for this, a big section of the population remains shut off from all this activity due to their illiteracy, lack of information, technical skills, contacts and lack of resources. This section may participate in this activity only as unskilled worker who breaks stones or carries loads or digs earth, and here too the village-level relationship may be extended to retain the low level of payments for example the exploitative landowner may be replaced in the new setting by the exploiter contractor.

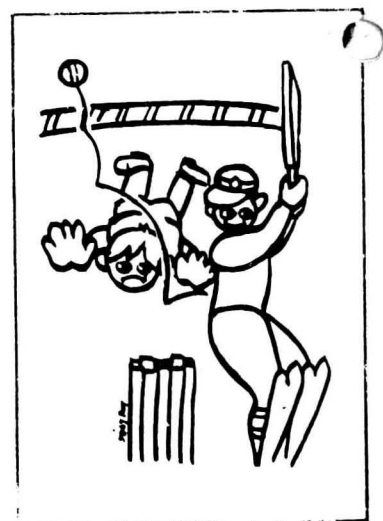
Also due to the lack of resources, this section is likely to have very limited access to the various consumer goods produced directly or indirectly by all this activity. According to NSS data for 1973-74, the bottom half of the population accounted for 21 per cent of industrial consumption in the rural sector and 20 per cent in the urban and the top two deciles for 53 per cent in the rural sector and 54 per cent in the urban sector. Commenting on this data, economist Pranab Bardhan notes, "These figures probably represent an underestimation of the actual concentration in industrial consumption since the NSS may not have adequately captured the

consumption of very rich households."

Shut off the poor sections may be from the quest of the better off population for more material comforts, but they cannot escape from their homes and fields to make room for dams, industries, mines, power plants etc, or pollution of their water sources or the destruction of natural forests. Several of them may face unemployment because of the availability now of alternative cheaper and better ways of providing goods and services earlier supplied by them, without making available alternative livelihood to them.

Indeed many changes appearing to be good for all people may have adverse effects on the deprived sections in such a divided society, whether intended or not. Making available better milk marketing facilities may be seen as beneficial for all villagers, but result in the denial of chaach (a nutritious by-product of milk) to the poor which they could get free from the better off families earlier when milk was processed locally. Weedicides may be seen as an efficient way of getting rid of weeds, but this may result in the loss of meagre employment opportunities earlier available to farm labourers. Setting up a card-

board factory to make use of crop residues may look like creating wealth from waste to some but not to the landless farm labourers who earlier got this free as fodder for their cattle. Advent of electricity may be hailed in a remote village by those who see a whole lot of economic opportunities opening up before them, but not the poor women dependent on hand pounding of grain to earn a meagre livelihood or others engaged in similar manual tasks now threatened by machines driven by electricity.





## Letters

### History repeats itself!

But in case of Panjab it seems it is going to repeat too soon.

Violence of 1982-83 was allowed to continue till an opportune moment when the Sikh community could be taught a lesson.

Govt. did not move till Sant Bhindranwale shifted to the Sanctuary of Sri Akal Takhat. Till as late as end of April, 84 he was a religious leader.

Through operation Blue Star two birds were killed with one salvo. Timing of attack leaves no one in doubt that the assault was on community and not on Sant Ji and his followers alone.

Today situation is rerun of that past. Violence goes on unchecked. Gurdwaras have been handed over to hard liners. This has swept the moderates off the political scene and made them irrelevant. Indirectly the idea that have-gun will rule has been proved.

With this amendment to the constitution Govt. has itself separated

Panjab from the rest of India.

Now who is separatist?

All these developments point towards another Blue or Black Star.

A reminder of the lesson that Sikhs are not a part of Hindus and that there are two ways to implement laws-for majority and minorities. Like a cat catches a mouse and handles its kitten.

So much is being done for Bhopal gas victims. But Nov. 84 was a dead issue.

There are only two options open to Sikhs. One to lose their identity and get assimilated into the saline ocean. Second if identity is to be maintained then follow the example of Jews world over before 1948. And prepare for a long drawn persecution.

Yours etc.  
Ashok Singh Bhai  
of Bagrian

### Another Jaffna in the Making?

"Who cares and what bothers? The emergency is welcome" retorted a young Sikh boy, scantily bearded, to the question that I posed to him in my endeavour to assess the general reaction of the people to the proposed emergency in Punjab. This was in Amritsar, last Saturday (19th March) and the boy was a graduate student at the Khalsa College Amritsar and a hardcore member of the AISSF. To all the individuals both boys and girls, in and out side the Golden Temple, in Amritsar and the areas around to whom I posed this question, the answers bore similar tones "This is going to be another big genocide (Vadda Gallughara) and after every such genocide Sikhs have come out more united, more resolved and more powerful, do convey this to the Delhi Sarkar". Said a young Sikh lady at the entrance to the Golden Temple.

My own observation during my two days stay at Amritsar, if I am not overspeclative, support the above assertions. I have no hesitation in saying that the militants and terrorists are gearing up fast to meet the challenge of emergency. Who knows, if they were already aware of this move of the Delhi Durbar as they prefer to call it. "This is our victory, we were expecting this, in fact this will take us near to our objective, the Khalistan" said very enthusiastically a group of young Sikh boys in the Parikarma of the Golden Temple which, otherwise remains devoid of devotees. I could not spot more than 6 persons in the whole of Par-

ikarma at one time. Earlier it used to have thousands of people moving around.

Out of the Golden Temple, common people belonging to both the communities expressed both fear and concern at the move of the Government. "Buta (Siangh) is bent upon uprooting the tree of Punjab," remarked an aged Sikh in Amritsar and he compared Governor Ray with Zakria Khan the Moghul Governor of Lahore. "Where is the need for this emergency. The Rajiv Government has failed to understand the nature of Punjabis. there is folly after folly. I foresee another Lanka here" This was the remark of a Hindu shopkeeper in Sultanwind area of Amritsar.

I do not say that the writ of Punjab government has ceased in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and adjoining areas. But then it will be apt to say that the writ of the militants is equally or probably more effective. of all the terrorist groups, the one, Khalistan commando force, headed by Gen. Labh Singh and Gurbachan Singh Manochahal is the most powerful. It has divided the territory under area commanders. One of the key areas to the North of Amritsar i.e. Batala, Gurdaspur, Chowk Mehta, Beas etc. are headed by the dreaded terrorist Surjit Singh Penta. The other key areas i.e. the South of Amritsar including Taran, Pati, Valtoha, Jandiala etc. are under the area command of 'Lt Gen' Sukhdev Singh Jhamke. recently they have ordered the

people not to watch TV. since its propaganda by the government is 'misleading'. some other recent directive are "the lights must be put off after 9 p.m.". And "the dogs must not be freed at night". In the entire rural area around Batala. I could spot very very few T.V. antenna's. In Punjab otherwise every village has at least 50% houses with T.V.

The night bears a death like silence and a slight mysterious sound is enough to take the breath out of a person. I witnessed all this during a night stay in a village near Amritsar. After 9 in the night an invisible terror can be observed as people go alert at the slightest sound and whisper to each other. The usual scene of a Punjab village in the night, the shouting of drunken farmers and the platform conferences, as if they never were the part of the Punjab life and culture.

The exodus of the minority community has accelerated since the beginning of the year. One can have a rare sight of minority community family in a village around Amritsar. Most of them have shifted to the cities, also many well to do Sikh families are now shifting to the cities. They go to villages in the morning and return before evening. I met many school teachers and merchants of the minority community, coming from Jalandhar and Amritsar, who earlier used to live locally but of late have taken to this routine.

Helpless Paramilitary Forces: The whole area in Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts has been converted into a worthless contonement of paramilitary forces who are not more than dumb witness to all the happens around. Two groups of youth clashed right in front of the CRPF Camp in Chowk Mehta on Amritsar Road on 18 March around moon. they were heavily armed and even had guns. The CRPF personnel watched helplessly even when some of the clashing youths entered the camp area while escaping from each other. The Punjab Police officers and personnel are deserting the rural police posts (Chowkis) after receiving threatening letters from the militants. Several such incidences were reported by the people, around Patti, Valtoha and Ajnala.

The Sikhs living out of Punjab: At Golden Temple I talked to the militants about the fate of the Sikhs, living out of Punjab. "We are thinking of it and we are planning to take steps and establish the Sikh security posts in areas where the Sikhs are in danger." "The Shiv Sena will be taught a lesson right in its home at Bombay but the out side Sikhs must take to 'Amrit' and arm themselves. The Guru had made every Sikh a warrior for the time of crisis". And about the killing of innocents they said, "No one punished by our men was innocent, most of them were police informers or they practiced the social evils all of which are barred in the religion. We are

painful in killing the Hindus but there is no other way to deter the government from killing innocent Sikh youths."

The Changing Patern of Thinking Some things have remained continuous in the thinking mechanism of the militants. The suspicion towards any move on the part of the Government is everpresent. "Bhai Jasbir Singh is not the same man as he was before his arrest" snapped the young boy about the New Akal Takht Chief. There is suspicion in the different militant camps about the released persons from Jodhpur.

In the last two three years I observed three distinct patterns of thought among the militants and the concerned people. At the top were those people who outrightly stood for Khalistan as a sovereign state and who never favour any talks and mediations etc. The majority in them are the Sikhs affected in the Delhi riots and elsewhere and the young boys of

punjab who have been victims of unwanted police torture. Khalistan Commando force is full of such people.

The second line of thought was a little lesser rigid. These people once in majority and now thinning out were those who stood for armed struggle until the government gives them a favourable bargaining stand besides Anandpur Sahib resolution and the punishment of the responsables of the Delhi riots in 1984.

The third and the last line of thought was of those people who wanted to see the settlement of the issue through negotiation and talks. They used to favour the killing of selected targets but were opposed to the innocent killings. They are now almost extinct. The second line people are eroding fastly and joining the top rank. And with the obvious response of government added to it, Punjab is not far from becoming another Jaffna.

Parminder S. Bhogal

### Appeal for Sikh Unity

It is well known that the Sikhs are united in groups, but the groups are kept away from each other by their respective leaders. Therefore, the problem is tackling of their leaders, so that all factions of Akalis and militant groups are brought together under one flag i.e. Nishan Sahib. Caution is to be exercised that any one having presently his own identity is not pushed away further to advantages of opposing forces, but persuaded to surrender his flag to Nishan Sahib. Though, it is easy said than done. But, if our approach is basically correct, the objective can be achieved eventually.

As for as militants are concerned, to them approach will be different than the others. The militants being sincere and intelligent, and more so having suffered while trying out their theories in regard to their objective would have learnt certain lessons. As such, they would be prepared to adopt any change in their thinking and methods, provided it meets the requirement of their objective. Which is to uphold the prestige of Khalsa panth and have equality of status, no one to have power to create discriminatory laws to subjugate their liberty of speech, movements and protection from the law of land, and curtailing their energy to prosperity and putting splinter in their religious freedom and Sikh way of life. To meet this requirement, they have to be persuaded to see light in the long battle of life to be set on that path which would be honoured by others thinking too. The short cut to success through war like thinking should be discarded, so that, the genuine people are with us. If this fails then, one would be justified to bring any suitable change in ones strategy. But at this movement soft path should be given preference over the rough one. What we need is to win over

the confidence of these boys, for which sincere approach must be adopted and not modern crookery, which is called diplomacy.

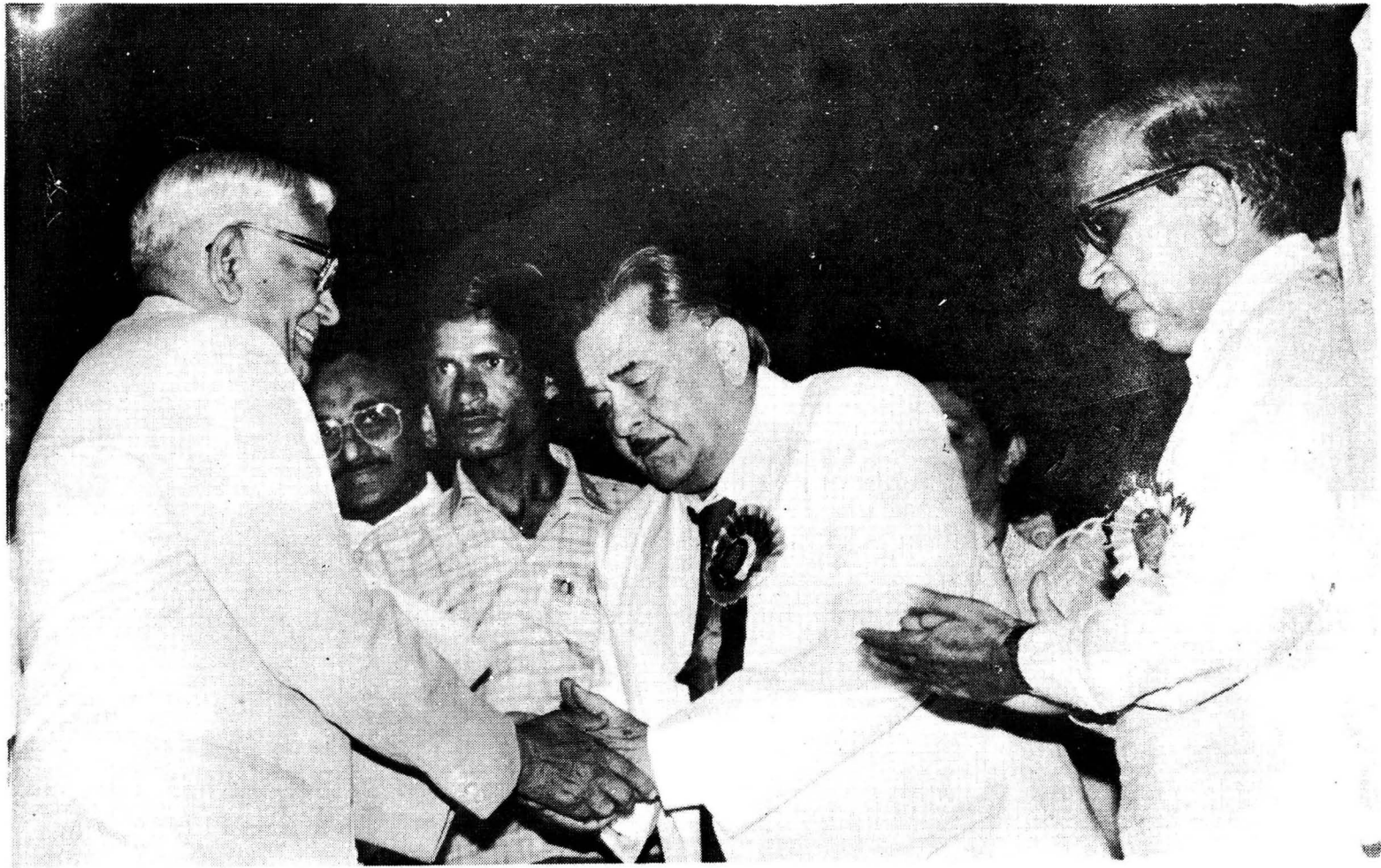
As for as Akal factions are concerned, they have proved to be basically selfish lot, and each one have committed blunders and have brought down the stature of the Khalsa Panth from all angles. Still the need is to get them together to have total unity without which, the sikh community cannot survive with dignity.

In this respect, the basic point is that those who are coming in voluntarily under Akal Takht Sahib, they should be accepted honourably. And those who are reluctant or have any fear of injustice, their doubts should be cleared out. It has been said that Mr. S.S. Barnala will not be accepted on various stages, but his party men can be accepted under the command of Akal Takht Sahib. The need of the hour is to show mercy on those who have been excommunicated. If they volunteer to beg for the mercy, it will be within the traditions and convention of Akal Takht Sahib to pardon their sins, if necessary with certain punishments. Therefore, on behalf of my friends, I will request revered Jathedar Jasbir Singh Khalsa to accept the surrender of Mr. S.S. Barnala. However no one should be given a chance to have any doubts about the good intention of Jathedar Akal Takht Sahib. I would also suggest that services of Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh should be utilised as consultant, which would be in the interest of the Panthic cause. We must live up to Gurbani "Jo Dise Gur Sikhra Nivn

Nivn Lagon Paon Jio."

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President, Shri R. Venkataraman, presenting 'DADASAHED PHALKE' Award to Shri Raj Kapoor, in New Delhi on May 2, 1988 (Photo by Shri D. Mohan, PIB)

The Films of Raj Kapoor - India's Charlie Chaplin - attained unprecedented popularity throughout the nation and beyond its borders. And that popularity has endured. As a star, as a director and as a phenomenon, Raj Kapoor is a figure to be reckoned with.



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## Home Ministry

Continued from page 20

### Killers not Punished

I am sorry to say that the human and courageous report by the PUCL and PUDR activists is called kangaroo court but not a single killer has so far been punished and, in fact, every devious means is being used to save them. No wonder today we are facing grave danger from within Punjab

and in Jammu and Kashmir and in parts of Bengal while the situation in eastern States, including Assam, is not at all satisfactory. I would not like to predict how things may develop in Tamil Nadu. But can we say that minorities, religious minorities, ethnic minorities and caste based minorities are living more harmoniously today than ever before? It is a big ques-

tion mark and is not being tackled with courage and realistically. Our people, full of enthusiasm, are inclined to despair today. Therein lies the litmus paper test for the performance of the Home Ministry. I wish I could end on a more hopeful note but genuinely speaking, I hope and pray that the next election when it is held will rid us from this pestilence.



## Pakistan Connection

Continued from page 3

tially during the last few months and two more battalions will be inducted soon. The Plan is to have more border outposts, preferably at a distance of four kms each and observation posts, 30 kms apart. The number of 'nakas' (ambushes) is being doubled. The BSF jawans have to work in difficult conditions in inhospitable terrain but their morale is high as proved by recent encounters.

### Growing Nexus

But the most serious problem facing the BSF is to break the growing nexus between smuggling and terrorism which has reached dangerous proportions since last year. There was a quantum jump in smuggling in 1987 when smuggled items worth Rs.23.72 crores were seized as against Rs.14.66 crores in 1986. The seizures up to April 27 this year are valued at about Rs. two crores. The frightening aspect from health and other points of view is that heroin, alone accounts for Rs.21 crores in 1987 and Rs.1.76 crores this year. Smuggling in of this deadliest of narcotics can be the other spur for pushing their way through the

border of the smugglers-cum-terrorists. The next item of smuggling from Pakistan is gold which accounted for over Rs. two crores in 1987. In this smuggling of arms, heroin and gold, 312 extremists were killed in 1986, 179 in 1987 and 76 so far this year. More than 14,000 persons were apprehended during the three years, showing thereby how profitable the business of smuggling has become, and hence the daring.

Pakistan's complicity in terrorism in Punjab is unquestionable. The question is whether it is of recent origin. The BSF I.G. has said that involvement of Pakistan in the smuggling of men and weapons had been known for long but it had become more daring during the last few months. The intruders now want to fight their way through the border. And why not when the price of heroin has arisen so high. The BSF has valued the price of one kilogram of heroin at more than Rs. five lakhs whereas it is much higher in the international market. The heroin trail starting somewhere in Iran passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan and goes right up to Nepal. Dangerously for India, smuggling of heroin gets mixed up

with terrorism in Punjab.

This is no attempt to belittle the Punjab problem but at the same time it is not good to blow Pakistan's hand out of proportion. Some of the speeches of our national leaders made recently tend to create a war psychosis. No doubt a near insurgency like situation prevails in Punjab. It must not, however, be forgotten that this situation is confined to the three border districts of Punjab. The point to be emphasised is that a solution to the problem does not lie across the border but on our side of the border. Fencing of the border can at best reduce the flow of men and weapons from Pakistan as admitted by BSF officials. As far as terrorism is concerned, the Indian authorities must stop the flow of men from India to Pakistan for training in arms and insurgency so that Pakistan has no recruits to train and brainwash. For this they must win the hearts and minds of the people, particularly those living in the border districts. So far the policy has been of ad hocism. The Centre has been responding to specific events. Even the political actions taken so far have been piecemeal. The latest experiment of releasing Mr. Jasbir Singh Rode has failed. Now the Centre is thinking of releasing Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, dismissed police officer who has been appointed United

Akali Dal's president. Political action and combating terrorism must go together, otherwise the

people will think that Pakistan's complicity is being overblown with an eye on the next elections.

## Memorable festival in Korea

The Sixth April Spring Friendship Art Festival in Pyongyang was held last month.

In April, 1982 a friendship concert which was attended by artists of many countries was held in Pyongyang to celebrate the 70th birthday of the great leader, President Kim Il Sung. Since then this festival has become a part of annual events in the DPRK.

It is a grand international art festival which is aimed at strengthening the cultural contacts and cooperation between the artists of many countries on the basis of the ideal of independence, friendship and peace.

Men of literature and the arts on the five continents are different from each other in language, colour, political view and religious belief. However, they love peace and justice and value friendship and solidarity and out of this common desire they hold a grand festival in Pyongyang every year and exchange their valuable success and experience gained in the creation of arts and promote their friendship.

This is a great contribution to the development of the cultural relations between the countries and peoples and of literature and the arts of mankind. This gives great encouragement to the world's

people in their just struggle for the building of a new independent world.

The Pyongyang art festival is becoming a more authoritative international festival and its level is becoming higher as the years go by, as a result of the active participation of progressive people and men of culture and the arts of the world.

Prize winners at home and abroad, People's Artistes, Merited Artistes and other famous artists are displaying their high artistic skills at the festival.

Through their performance they are singing the praises of the greatness and noble virtues of respected President Kim Il Sung who is making an immortal contribution to the Korean and the world revolution and of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Also, they are giving vivid artistic representation of the industrious and brave people of their countries who are working hard to build a new society as well as their national customs and optimistic life.

Along with successful performance the festival will include colourful functions, inspections of various places, pleasant recreations, etc.

## AN APOLOGY

We apologise to our readers for not having been able to bring out the issue dated 20th of April, 1988. It had been decided to combine the two issues dated 20th April and 5th May, '88 into one. An announcement to this effect was written out but owing to some misunderstanding it could not be inserted in the last issue. We apologise for this lapse. This particular issue runs to 20 pages instead of the usual 16 pages.

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# Union Home Ministry's Performance Disappointing says Lt.Gen. J.S. Aurora

(From our special correspondent)

**S**peaking in the Rajya Sabha on 26 April Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora analysed the working of Union Home Ministry. He said, I consider the Home Ministry as the nerve centre of not only the Central Government, but also of the country's administration as a whole. It plays a significant role in the Centre-State relationship. It is also charged with the maintenance of internal cohesion and security of the country. It holds the key to national integration. Its performance, therefore, is of paramount importance for the good health and well-being of the nation. When we analyse the performance and working of this all-powerful and cardinal instrument of Government, we cannot but feel disappointed, discouraged and even dismayed at the state in which the country has descended in the last three years and more so in the last year.

## Anathema

**T**he Home Minister who should be a guide and a philosopher to the State Governments is more of an anathema to the Chief Ministers of the States where the Congress Party writ does not run. For the Congress-run States, he is the High Command held in great awe. Over-centralisation has reduced the Chief Ministers in the States run by the Congress (I) to minions who are fearful of taking any initiative or introducing any independent policy. Their reduced stature prevents them to rule effectively and to handle the dissidence in the party firmly.

Frequent derogatory pronouncements about the performance of the non-Congress Chief Ministers has created an atmosphere of confrontation rather than of cooperation which is so essential for the smooth-running and efficient administration. Needless to say that this militates against the emotional integration of the people and national integration of the country.

## Correct Job

**I**f I may suggest humbly the Home Minister should spend more time building bridges and mending fences rather than being a staunch and strident defender of the Prime Minister against all and sundry. If I may further suggest, this job may well be assigned to a more junior Minister who is capable of doing all this with a greater finesse.

Security of the country is not just a law and order problem which can be left entirely to the law and order enforcing agencies. It is much more. First and foremost, the Government must command the respect and confidence of the

people, specially from the man in the street as well as the man in the field. This requires an efficient, sympathetic and equitable administrative machinery which must be meticulous in the application of the law of the land without fear and favour. Today, we have a Government which has little application but voracious appetite for creating more horrendous acts and laws which are a source of more misery and hardship for the innocent while the guilty can flout them at will and with impunity.

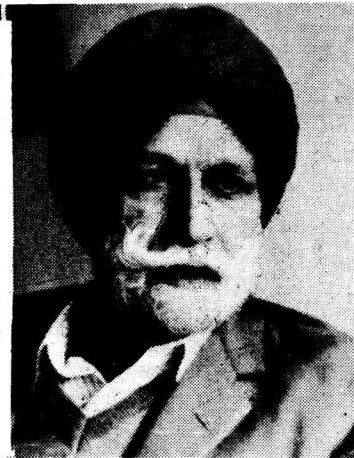
in the mistaken belief that the Centre knows best, certain measures are adopted when the cure is more dangerous than the disease. This has been amply proved time and again in the manner the Punjab problem has been tackled and made more complicated and intractable. Today it has attained such dangerous and menacing proportions that the very integrity of the country is being jeopardized and the social fibre of the nation is under great strain. What I would like to mention here is that the Fifty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution is not going to be a panacea.

## Subverting Democracy

**I**mpartiality, fair-play and justice have become the biggest casualties in the way every instrument of governance is manipulated. In fact, I charge the Home Minister for subverting many of the democratic institutions and being directly responsible for the deterioration in the moral standards and discipline of the law-enforcing agencies. Its permissive attitude and reluctance to take disciplinary action against the erring and corrupt individuals has made these forces not just unpopular but hated. I say this very reluctantly and in anguish but in all sincerity and candour. This observation is based on information gathered personally by me from the unfortunate members of both the communities in Punjab and outside. No wonder that terrorists can kill and loot at will and get away. (Time bell) Sir, I have grave doubts about the efficacy and effectiveness of our various Intelligence organisations, but it would not be appropriate at this juncture to discuss them in detail. I hope these are not fishing in troubled waters or further muddying the churned-up water. I say that as a piece of warning.

## Internal Dissensions

**T**oday, when we are being threatened from abroad, in accordance with the oft-repeated pronouncements by the Treasury Benches, we must make



every genuine effort to eliminate internal dissensions. These cannot be eliminated by suppression alone, by bullets, by State terrorism, by creating horrendous laws which threaten the life and liberty of individuals....

By unfair propaganda, by confrontation against those who have different ideologies, by blaming them that they are destabilising the Government and are, therefore, anti-national, by concentrating and centralising all authority not only in one place, but in one individual.

This is one sure way of damaging and even destroying the solidarity of the country. The greatest failure of this Government has been its inability to punish the guilty of inhuman crimes that Delhi witnessed in November 1984 and killings more recently in Meerut. This is the shameful record. But the Government seems to be paralysed and unwilling to do anything about it. Till such time efforts are made to wash this shameful kalank ka tika of the Government, the Government will never have the moral right to govern effectively.

Continued on page 19

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